



UNIVERSITÄTS-
BIBLIOTHEK
PADERBORN

Universitätsbibliothek Paderborn

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. 33. Fortune oftentimes rational.

[urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-53388](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-53388)

extremest Importunity, to do as much for her; and God, at their joint Request, shortly after calling her to him, it was a Death embraced on both Sides, with singular Content.



C H A P. XXXIII.

That Fortune is oftentimes observed to act by the Rule of Reason.

THE Inconstancy, and various Motions of Fortune, may reasonably make us expect, she should present us with all Sorts of Faces. Can there be a more express Act of Justice than this? The Duke of *Valentinois*, having resolved to poison Cardinal *Adrian Cornetto*, with whom his Father, Pope *Alexander* the Sixth, and himself, were to go to Supper in the Vatican; he sent before a Bottle of poisoned Wine, and withal, strict Order to the Butler to keep it very safe. The Pope being come before his Son, and calling for Drink, the Butler supposing this Wine had not been so strictly recommended to his Care, but only upon the Account of it's Excellency, presented it immediately to the Pope, and the Duke himself coming in presently after, and being confident they had not meddled with his Bottle, took also his Cup; so that the Father died immediately upon the Spot, and the Son, after having been long tormented with Sickness, was reserved to another, and a worse Fortune: Sometimes she seems to play upon us, just in the Nick of an Affair: Monsieur *d'Estret*, at that time Guidon to Monsieur *de Vendosme*; and Monsieur *de Liques*, Lieutenant to the Duke of *Arscot's* Troop, being both Pretenders to the *Sieur de Foungeffelle's* Sister, though of different Parties, (as it oft falls out amongst frontier Neighbours,) the *Sieur de Liques* carried her; but on the same Day he was married, and which was worse, before he went to Bed to his Wife, the Bridegroom having a Mind to break a Lance in Honour of his new Bride, went out to skirmish, near to *St. Omers*, where the *Sieur d'Estret*

tree proving the Stronger, took him Prisoner, and the more to illustrate his Victory, the Lady herself was fain

*Conjugis ante coacta novi dimittere collum,
Quam veniens una, atque altera rursus hyems,
Noctibus in longis avidum saturasset amorem*.*

Of her fair Arms, the am'rous Ring to break,
Which clung so fast to her new Spouse's Neck,
E're of two Winters many a friendly Night
Had fated her Love's greedy Appetite.

to request him of Courtesy, to deliver up his Prisoner to her, as he accordingly did; the Gentlemen of *France* never denying any thing to the Ladies. Does she not seem to be an Artist here? *Constantine*, the Son of *Hellen*, founded the Empire of *Constantinople*; and so many Ages after, *Constantine*, the Son of *Hellen*, put an End to it. Sometimes she is pleased to emulate our Miracles. We are told that King *Clouis* besieging *Angoulesme*, the Walls fell down of themselves by divine Favour. And *Bouchet* has it from some Author, that King *Robert* having sat down before a City, and being stole away from the Siege, to keep the Feast of St. *Aignan* at *Orleans*; as he was in Devotion at a certain Place of the Mass, the Walls of the beleaguered City, without any Manner of Violence, fell down with a sudden Ruin. But she did quite contrary in our *Milan* War; for Captain *Rense* laying Siege to the City of *Verona*, and having carried a Mine under a great Parcel of the Wall, the Mine being sprung, the Wall was lifted from it's Base, but dropt down again nevertheless whole and entire, and so exactly upon it's Foundation, that the Besieged suffered no Inconvenience by that Attempt. Sometimes she plays the Physician: *Jason Pherus* being given over by the Physicians, by Reason of a desperate Imposthuration in his Breast, having a Mind to rid himself of his Pain, by Death at least, in a Battle, threw himself desperately into the thickest of the Enemy, where he was so fortunately wounded quite through the Body, that the

* *Catullus.*

Imposthume

Imposthume broke, and he was perfectly cured. Did she not also excel the Painter *Protogenes* in his Art? Who having finished the Picture of a Dog quite tired and out of Breath, in all the other Parts excellently well to his own liking, but not being able to express as he would, the Slaver and Foam that should come out of his Mouth, vexed and angry at his Work, he took his Sponge, which by cleaning his Pencils had imbibed several Sorts of Colours, and threw it in a Rage against the Picture, with an Intent utterly to deface it; when Fortune guiding the Sponge to hit just upon the Mouth of the Dog, it there performed what all his Art was not able to do. Does she not sometimes direct our Counsels, and correct them? *Isabella*, Queen of *England*, being to sail from *Zealand* into her own Kingdom, with an Army in Favour of her Son, against her Husband, had been lost, had she come into the Port she intended, being there laid wait for by the Enemy; but Fortune, against her Will, threw her into another Haven, where she landed in Safety. And he who throwing a Stone at a Dog, hit and killed his Mother-in-Law, had he not Reason to pronounce this Verse,

Ταυτόματον ἡμῶν καλλίω βελεύεται*.

— By this I see,
Fortune will always better Aim than we.

Fortune has more Judgment than we. *Icetes* had contracted with two Soldiers to kill *Timoleon* at *Adranon* in *Sicily*. These Villians took their Time to do it, when he was assisting at a Sacrifice, who thrusting into the Crowd, as they were making Signs to one another, that now was a fit Time to do their Business, in steps a Third, who with a Sword takes one of them full drive over the Pate, lays him Dead upon the Place, and away he runs. Which the other seeing, and concluding himself discovered and lost, he runs to the Altar and begs for Mercy, promising to discover the whole Truth, which as he was doing, and laying

* *Meander*.

open the whole Conspiracy, behold the third Man, who being apprehended, was, as a Murtherer, thrust and halled by the People through the Prefs towards *Timoleon*, and other the most eminent Persons of the Assembly, before whom being brought, he cried out for Pardon, pleaded that he had justly slain his Father's Murtherer; which he also proving upon the Place, by sufficient Witnesses, which his good Fortune very opportunely supplied him withal, that his Father was really killed in the City of the *Leontins*, by that very Man on whom he had taken his Revenge, he was presently awarded ten Attick * Mines, * *The old Attick Mine was seventy-five Drach:* for having had the good Fortune, by designing to revenge the Death of his Father, to preserve the Life of the common Father of *Sicily*. Thus Fortune, in her Conduct, surpasses all the Rules of human Prudence. But, to conclude, is there not a direct Application of her Favour, Bounty, and Piety, manifestly discovered in this Action? *Ignatius* the Father, and *Ignatius* the Son, being proscribed by the Triumviri of *Rome*, resolved upon this generous Act of mutual Kindness, to fall by the Hands of one another, and by that Means to frustrate and defeat the Cruelty of the Tyrants; and accordingly, with their Swords drawn, ran full drive one upon another, where Fortune so guided the Points, that they made two equally mortal Wounds, affording withal so much Honour to so brave a Friendship, as to leave them just Strength enough to draw out their bloody Swords, that they might have Liberty to embrace one another in this dying Condition, with so close and hearty an Embrace, that the Executioners cut off both their Heads at once, leaving the Bodies still fast linked together in this noble Knot, and their Wounds joined Mouth to Mouth, affectionately sucking in the lost Blood, and Remainder of the Lives of one another.