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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. 45. Of the Battle of Dreux.

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was it that gave *Mark Anthony* afterwards occasion to reproach him, that he had not the Courage so much as with open Eyes, to behold the Order of his own Squadrons, and not to have dar'd to present himself before the Soldiers, till first *Agrippa* had brought him News of the Victory obtain'd. But as to the Business of young *Marius*, who did much worse (for the Day of the last Battle, against *Sylla*, after he had order'd his Army, given the Word and Signal of Battel, he laid him down under the Shade of a Tree to repose himself, and fell so fast asleep, that the Rout, and Flight of his Men could hardly awake him, having seen nothing of the Fight) he is said to have been at that Time so extremely spent, and worn out with Labour and want of Sleep that Nature could hold out no longer. Now upon what has been said, the Physicians may determine, whether Sleep be so necessary that our Lives depend upon it: For we read that King *Perseus* of *Macedon* being Prisoner at *Rome*, was wak'd to Death: but *Pliny* instances such as have lived long without Sleep. *Herodotus* speaks of Nations, where the Men sleep and wake by half Years: And they who write the Life of the wife *Epimenides*, affirm, that he slept seven and fifty Years together.



C H A P. XLV.

Of the Battle of Dreux.

OUR Battle of *Dreux*, is remarkable for several extraordinary Accidents: But such Men as have no great Kindness for the Duke of *Guise*, nor much favour his Reputation, are willing to have him thought to blame, and that his making a Halt, and delaying Time with the Forces he commanded, whilst the Constable who was General of the Army was raked through and through with the Enemies Artillery, his Battalion routed, and himself taken Prisoner; is not to be excus'd: And that he had much better have ran the Hazard of charging the Enemy in the Flank, than staying for the Advantage of falling in upon the

the Rear, to suffer so great and so important a Loss. But, besides what the Event demonstrated, who will consider it without Passion or Prejudice, will easily be induced to confess, that the Aim and Design not of a Captain only, but of every private Soldier ought to look at the Victory in general; and that no particular Occurrences, how nearly soever they may concern his own Interest, should divert him from that Pursuit. *Philopæmen*, in an Encounter with *Machanidas*, having sent before a good strong Party of his Archers, to begin the Skirmish, which were by the Enemy routed and pursued; who pursuing them, and pushing on the Fortune of their Arms in the Heat of Victory; and in that Pursuit passing by the Battalion where *Philopæmen* was, though his Soldiers were impatient to fall on, yet he was better temper'd, and did not think fit to stir from his Post, nor to present himself to the Enemy to relieve his Men, but having suffer'd them to be chas'd about the Field, and cut in Pieces before his Face, then charged in upon their Body of Foot, when he saw them left naked by their Horse; and notwithstanding that they were *Lacedæmonians*, yet taking them in the Nick, when thinking themselves secure of the Victory, they began to disorder their Ranks, he did his Business with great Facility, and then put himself in Pursuit of *Machanidas*: Which Case is very like that of *Monsieur de Guise*. In that bloody Battle betwixt *Agefilaus*, and the *Bæotians*, which *Xenophon*, who was present at it, reports to be the rudest and most bloody that he had ever seen, *Agefilaus* wou'd the Advantage that Fortune presented him, to let the *Bæotians* Battalion pass by, and then to charge them in the Rear, how certain soever he made himself of the Victory, judging it would rather be an Effect of Conduct than Valour, to proceed that Way: And therefore to shew his Prowess, rather chose, with a wonderful Ardour of Courage to charge them in the Front; but he was well beaten, and wounded for his Pains, and constrain'd at last to disengage himself, and to take the Course he had at first neglected, opening his Battalion to give Way to this Torrent of the *Bæotians* Party, and being past by, taking Notice that they march'd in Disorder, like Men that thought themselves out of Danger, he then pursu'd, and charg'd them in Flank and Rear;

yet could not prevail so far as to bring it to so general a Rout, but that they leisurely retreated, still facing about upon him, till they were retired into Safety.



C H A P. XLVI.

Of Names.

WHAT Variety of Herbs soever are shuffled together in the Dish, yet the whole Mass is swallow'd up in one Name of a Sallet. In like Manner, under the Consideration of Names, I will make a Hodge-podge of differing Articles. Every Nation has certain Names, that, I know not why, are taken in no good Sense, as with us, *John, William, and Benedict*. In the Genealogy of Princes also there seems to be certain Names fatally affected, as the *Ptolemies of Egypt, the Henry's of England, the Charles's of France, the Baldwins of Flanders, and the Williams of our ancient Aquitaine*, from whence 'tis said, the Name of *Guyenne* has it's Derivation; which would seem far fetch'd, were there not as rude Derivations in *Plato* himself. 'Tis a very frivolous Thing in itself, but nevertheless worthy to be recorded for the Strangeness of it, which is writ by an Eye-witness; that *Henry Duke of Normandy, Son of Henry the Second, King of England*, making a great Feast in *France*, the Concourse of Nobility and Gentry was so great, that being, for Sports Sake, divided into Troops, according to their Names, in the first Troop, which consisted of *Williams*, there were found an hundred and ten Knights sitting at the Table of that Name, without reckoning the ordinary Gentlemen, and their Servants. It is as pleasant to distinguish the Tables by the Names of the Guests, as it was in the Emperor *Geta*, to distinguish the several Courses of his Meat, by the first Letters of the Meats themselves, where those that began with *B*, were serv'd up together, as *Brawn, Beef, Bream, Buttards and Beccaficos*, and so of others. Now there is a Saying, that it is a good thing to have a good Name, that is to say, Credit, and a good Repute: But besides this, it