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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. 52. Of the Parsimony of the Ancients.

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

the ordinary Writers of his Time, so far is he from approaching the ancient Divinity. And we make nothing of giving the Sirname of *Great* to Princes that have nothing in them above a popular Grandeur.



C H A P. LII.

*Of the Parsimony of the Ancients.*

**A** *Tilius Regulus*, General of the Roman Army in *Africk*, in the Height of all his Glory and Victories over the *Carthaginians*, writ to the Republick to acquaint them, that a certain Peasant whom he had left in Trust with his whole Estate, which was in all but seven Acres of Land, was run away with all his Instruments of Husbandry, entreating therefore, that they would please to call him Home, that he might take Order in his own Affairs, lest his Wife and Children should suffer by this Disaster: Whereupon the Senate appointed another to manage his Business, caused his Losses to be made good, and ordered his Family to be maintained at the publick Expence. The elder *Cato* returning Consul from *Spain*, sold his War-Horse, to save the Money it would have cost in bringing him back by Sea into *Italy*; and being Governor of *Sardinia*, made all his Visits on Foot, without other Attendants, than one Officer of the Republick, to hold up the Train of his Gown and carry a Censer for Sacrifices; and, for the most Part, carried his Mail himself. He bragged, that he had never worn a Gown that cost above ten Crowns, nor had ever sent above Ten-pence to the Market for one Day's Provision; and that as to his Country Houses, he had not one that was rough cast on the Out-side. *Scipio Emilianus*, after two Triumphs, and two Consulships, went an Embassy with no more than seven Servants in his Train. 'Tis said, that *Homer* had never more than one, *Plato* three, and *Zeno*, Founder of the Sect of *Stoicks*, none at all. *Tiberius Gracchus* was allowed but Five-pence Half-

Half-penny a Day, when employed as publick Minister about the publick Affairs, and being at that time the greatest Man of *Rome*.



## C H A P. LIII.

*Of a Saying of Cæsar.*

**I**F we would sometimes bestow a little Consideration upon ourselves, and employ that Time in examining our own Abilities which we spend in prying into other Men's Actions, and discovering Things without us, we should soon perceive of how infirm and decaying Materials this Fabrick of ours is composed. Is it not a singular Testimony of Imperfection, that we cannot establish our Satisfaction in any one Thing, and that even our own Fancy and Desire should deprive us of the Power to choose what is most proper and useful for us? A very good Proof of this, is the great Dispute that has ever been amongst the Philosophers, of finding out a Man's principal and sovereign Good; that Dispute continues yet, and will eternally continue, without Solution or Agreement.

—*Dum abest quod avemus, id exuperare videtur,  
Cætera, post aliud cum contigit illud avemus,  
Et sitis æqua tenet* \*.

The absent we covet, best doth seem,  
The next that comes captivates our Esteem  
At the same rate.

Whatever that is that falls into our Knowledge and Possession, we find it satisfies not, and still pant after Things to come, and unknown; and these because the present

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\* *Lucret. l. 3.*