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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. 8. Of the Affection of Fathers to their Children.

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Nations being very warlike, have given the Preheminence to that of the *Virtues* which was most familiar to them, and which they thought of the most worthy Character. Just as our Passion and the feverish Solicitude we have of the Chastity of Women, makes saying a good Woman, a Woman of Worth, and a Woman of Honour and Virtue, to signify no more but a chaste Woman: As if to oblige her to that one Duty, we were indifferent as to all the rest; and gave them the Reins to all other Faults whatever, to compound for that one of Incontinence.



C H A P. VIII.

Of the Affection of Fathers to their Children.

To Madam D'ESTISSAC.

Madam, if the Strangeness and Novelty of my Subject, which generally give Value to Things, do not save me, I shall never come off with Honour from this foolish Attempt: But 'tis so fantastick, and carries a Face so unlike the common Custom, that the Oddness of it may, perhaps, make it pass. 'Tis a Melancholick Humour, and consequently an Humour very much an Enemy to my natural Complexion, engendred by the Pensiveness of the Solitude, into which, for some Years past, I have retir'd myself, that first put into my Head this idle Fancy of Writing: Wherein, finding myself totally unprovided and empty of other Matters, I presented myself to myself, for Argument and Subject. 'Tis the only Book in the World of its Kind, and of a wild extravagant Design: there is nothing worth Remark but the Extravagancy in this Affair: For in a Subject so vain and frivolous, the best Workman in the World could not have given it a Form fit to recommend it to any Manner of Esteem.

Now, Madam, being to draw my own Picture to the Life, I should have omitted the only graceful Feature, had I not represented in it the Honour I have ever paid to your Merits;

Merits; which I have purposely chosen to say in the Beginning of this Chapter, by reason, that among the many excellent Qualities you are Mistress of, the tender Love you have shewn to your Children, worthily holds one of the chief Places. Whoever shall know at what Age *Monsieur d'Essiac*, your Husband, left you a Widow, the great and honourable Matches have since been offer'd to you, as many as to any Lady of your Condition in *France*; the Constancy and Steadiness wherein you have liv'd so many Years, and wherewith you have gone thro' so many sharp Difficulties; the Charge and Conduct of their Affairs who have persecuted you in every Corner of the Kingdom, and who yet are not wary of tormenting you; and the happy Direction you have given in all this, either by your single Prudence, or good Fortuæ, will easily conclude with me, that we have not so lively an Example as your's of Maternal Affection in our Times. I praise God, *Madam*, that it has been so well employ'd; for the great Hopes that *Monsieur d'Essiac*, the Son, gives of himself, are sufficient Assurances that when he comes to Age, you will reap from him all the Obedience and Gratitude of a very good Man. But forasmuch as by reason of his tender Years he has not been capable of taking notice of those numberless Offices of Kindness which he has receiv'd from you; I will take care, if these Papers ever happen to fall into his Hands, when I shall neither have Mouth nor Speech left to deliver it to him, that he shall receive a true Account of those Things from me, which shall be more effectually manifested to him by their own Effects, and by which he will understand, that there is not a Gentleman in *France* who stands more indebted to a Mother's Care; and that he cannot for the Future give a better, nor more certain Testimony of himself, of his own Worth and Virtue, than by acknowledging you for that excellent Mother you are.

If there be any Law truly natural, that is to say, any Instinct that is seen universally, and perpetually imprinted in both Beasts and Men (which is not without Controversy) I can then say, that in my Opinion, next to the Care every Animal has of his own Preservation, and to avoid that

*The Affection
of Parents
towards their
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greater than
that of Children
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why.*

that which may hurt him, the Affection that the Begetter bears to his Off-spring, holds the Second Place in this List. And seeing that Nature seems to have recommended it to us, having Regard to the Extension and Propagation of the successive Piece of this Machine: 'Tis no Wonder, on the contrary, that of Children towards their Parents is not so great. To which we may add this other *Aristotelian* Consideration, *That he who confers a Benefit on any one, loves him better than he is below'd by him again*: And that every Artificer is fonder of his Work, than, if that Work had Sense, it would be of the Artificer; by reason, that is dear to us to be, and to be consists in Moving and Action: Therefore every one has, in some sort, a Being in his Work. Whoever confers a Benefit, exercises a fair and honest Action; who receives it, exercises the *Utile* only. Now the *Utile* is much less amiable than the *Honestum*: The *Honestum* is stable and permanent, supplying him who has done it with a continual Gratification. The *Utile* loses itself, easily slides away, and the Memory of it is neither so fresh, nor so pleasing. Those Things are dearest to us that have cost us most, and giving is more chargeable than receiving. Since it has pleas'd God to endue us with some Capacity of weighing and considering Things, to the End we may not, like Brutes, be servilely subjected and enslav'd by the Laws common to both; but that we should by Judgment and a voluntary Liberty apply ourselves to them: We ought, indeed sometimes, to yield to the simple Authority of Nature, but not suffer ourselves to be tyrannically hurry'd away and transported by her; since Reason alone should have the Conduct of our Inclinations. I, for my Part, have a strange Disgust to those Inclinations that are started in us, without the Meditation and Direction of the Judgment. As upon the Subject I am speaking of, I cannot entertain that Passion of dandling and caressing an Infant scarcely born, having, as yet, neither Motion of Soul, nor Shape of Body distinguishable, by which they can render themselves amiable; and have not willingly suffer'd them to be nurs'd near me: A true and regular Affection ought to spring and increase with the Knowledge they give us of themselves, and then if they are worthy of it, natural Propens walking Hand in Hand with Reason, to cherish them with a truly Paternal Love; and to judge and discern also if they

they be otherwise, still submitting ourselves to Reason, notwithstanding the Inclinations of Nature. It is often quite otherwise, and most commonly we find ourselves more taken with the Play and puerile Simplicity of our Children, than we are afterwards with their compleat Actions; as if we had lov'd them for our Sport, like Monkies, and not as Men. And some there are, who are very liberal in buying them Balls to play withal, who are very close handed for the least necessary Expence when they come to Age: Nay, to such Degree, that it looks as if the Jealousy of seeing them appear in, and enjoy the World, when we are about to leave it, renders us more niggardly and stingy towards them. It vexes us, that they tread upon our Heels, as if to solicit us to go out; and if this be to be fear'd, since the Order of Things will have it so, that they cannot, to speak the Truth, be nor live, but at the Expence of our Being and Life, we should never meddle with getting Children. For my Part, I think it Cruelty and Injustice not to receive them into the Share and Society of our Goods, and not to make them Partakers in the Intelligence of our Domestick Affairs, when they are capable, and not to lessen and contract our own Expences, to make the more room for theirs, seeing we beget them to that Effect. 'Tis unjust, that an old Fellow, deaf, lame, and half dead, should, alone, in a Corner of the Chimney, enjoy the Goods that were sufficient for the Maintenance and Advancement of many Children, and to suffer them in the mean time to lose their best Years, for want of Means to put themselves in Publick Service, and the Knowledge of Men. A Man by this Means drives them to desperate Courses, and to seek out by any Means, how unjust or dishonourable soever, to provide for their own Support. As I have, in my Time, seen several Young Men, of good Extraction, so addicted to Stealing, that no Correction could cure them of it. I know one, of a very good Family, to whom at the Request of a Brother of his, a very honest and brave Gentleman, I once spoke upon this Account; who made answer, and confes'd to me roundly, that he had been put upon this dirty Practice, by the Severity and Avarice of his Father: But that he was now so accusom'd to it, he could not leave it. At which Time he was trapp'd stealing a Lady's Rings, being come into her Chamber as she was dressing, with several

several others. He put me in Mind of a Story I had heard of another Gentleman, so perfect and accomplish'd in this genteel Trade in his Youth, that after he came to his Estate and resolv'd to give it over, could not hold his Hands, nevertheless, if he pass'd by a Shop where he saw any Thing he lik'd, from catching it up, tho' it put him to the Shame of sending afterwards to pay for it. And I have myself seen several so habituated to this laudable Quality, that even amongst their Comrades they could not forbear Filching, tho' with Intent to restore what they had taken. I am a *Gascon*, and yet there is no Vice I so little understand as that; I hate it something more by Disposition than I condemn it in my Discourse: I do not so much as desire any thing of another Man's. This Province of our's is, in plain Truth, a little more suspected than the other Parts of the Kingdom; and yet we have often seen in our Times Men of good Families, of other Provinces, in the Hands of Justice, convicted of several abominable Thefts: I fear this Debauch is, in some sort, to be attributed to the foremention'd Vice of the Fathers; and if a Man should tell me, as a Lord of very good Understanding once did, *That he hoarded up Wealth, not to extract any other Fruit and Use from his Parsimony, but to make himself honour'd and sought to by his own Relations: And that Age having depriv'd him of all other Forces, it was the only remaining Remedy to maintain his Authority in his Family, and to keep him from being neglected and despised by all the World* (and, in Truth, not only old Age, but all other Imbecility, according to *Aristotle*, is the Promoter of Avarice) this is something, but it is Physick for a Disease that a Man should prevent. A Father is very miserable that has no other hold of his Children's Affections than the Need they have of his Assistance, if that can be call'd Affection; he must render himself worthy to be respected by his Virtue and Wisdom, and belov'd by his Bounty and the Sweetness of his Manners. Even the very Ashes of a rich Matter have their Value; and we generally, by Custom, have the Bones and Relicks of worthy Men in Regard and Reverence. No old Age can be so ruinous and offensive in a Man who has pass'd his Life in Honour, but it must be venerable,

venerable, especially to his Children; the Soul of whom he must have train'd up to their Duty by Reason not by Necessity and the Need they have of him, nor by Roughness and Force.

— *Errat longe, mea quidem sententia,
Qui imperium credat esse gravius aut stabilius
Vi quod fit, quam illud quod amicitia adjungitur* *.

And he does mainly vary from my Sense,
Who thinks the Empire gain'd by Violence
More absolute and durable than that
Which Gentleness and Friendship do create.

I condemn all Violence in the Education of a tender Soul, that is design'd for Honour and Liberty. There is, I know not what of Servile in Rigour and Restraint; and I am of Opinion, that what is not to be done by Reason, Prudence and Address, is never to be effected by Force. I myself was brought up after that Manner, and they tell me, that, in all my first Age, I never felt the Rod but twice, and then very easily. I have practis'd the same Method with my Children, who most of them dy'd at Nurse; but *Leonora*, my only Daughter, is arriv'd to the Age of Six Years and upward, without other Correction for her Childish Faults (her Mother's Indulgence easily concurring) than Words only, and those very gentle. In which kind of Proceeding, tho' my End and Expectation should be both frustrated, there are other Causes enough to lay the Fault on, without blaming my Discipline, which I know to be natural and just; and I should in this have yet been more religious towards the Males, as born to less Subjection and more free; and I should have made it my Business to swell their Hearts with Ingenuity and Freedom. I have never observ'd other Effects of Whipping, unless to render them more cowardly, or more wilful and obstinate. Do we desire to be belov'd of our Children? Will we remove from them all Occasion of Wishing our Death? (tho' no Occasion of so horrid a Wish can either be just or excusable, *Nullum scelus rationem habet*) Let us reasonably accommodate their Lives with what is in our Power. In order to

* *Terence, Adelph. Act. i. Sc. 1.*

this, we should not marry so young, that our Age shall in a Manner be confounded with theirs; for this Inconvenience plunges us into many very great Difficulties: I say, the Gentry of the Nation, who are of a Condition wherein they have little to do, and live upon their Revenues only: For in other Conditions, where Life is dedicated to Profit, the Plurality and Numbers of Children is an Increase to good Husbandry, and they are so many new Tools and Instruments wherewith to grow rich. I marry'd at Three and Thirty Years of Age, and agree in the Opinion of Thirty Five, which is said to be that of *Aristotle*. *Plato* will have no body marry before Thirty; but he has reason to laugh at those who undertake the Work of Marriage after Five and Fifty, and condemn their Offspring as unworthy of Aliment and Life. *Thales* gave to this the truest Limits, who young, and being importun'd by his Mother to marry, answer'd, *That it was too soon*; and being grown in Years, and urg'd again, *That it was too late*. A Man

*The Use of
Women ener-
vates young
Men.*

must deny Opportunity to every importunate Action. The ancient *Gauls* look'd upon it as a very horrid Thing, for a Man to have Society with a Woman before twenty Years of Age; and strictly recommended to the Men, who design'd themselves for War, the keeping their Virginity till well grown in Years, forasmuch as Courage is abated and diverted by the Use of Women.

*Ma hor congiunta à giovinetta sposa,
Lieta homai, de figli era invilito
Negli affetti di padre, & di marito *.*

But now being marry'd to a fair young Wife,
He's quite fall'n off from his old Course of Life:
His Mettle is grown rusty, and his Care
His Wife and Children do betwixt them share.

Muleaffes, King of *Tunis*, he whom the Emperor *Charles V.* restor'd to the Kingdom, reproach'd the Memory of his Father *Mahomet* with the Frequentation of Women, styling him *Loose, Effeminate, and a Getter of Children*. The *Greek History* observes of *Jecus*, the *Tarentine*, of

* *Tasso Can. 10.*

Chryso, Astipus, Diopompus, and others, that to keep their Bodies in order for the *Olympick Games*, and such like Exercises, they deny'd themselves, during that Preparation, all Commerce with *Venus*. In a certain Country of the *Spanish Indies*, Men were not admitted to marry till after Forty Years of Age, and yet the Girls were allow'd to go to't at Ten. 'Tis not time for a Gentleman of Five and Thirty Years old, to give place to his Son who is Twenty; he being himself in a Condition to serve both in the Camp, and Court of his Prince, has himself need of all his Equipage; and yet doubtless ought to allow his Son a Share, but not so great a one, as wholly to disfurnish himself; and for such a one, the Saying, that Fathers have ordinarily in their Mouths, *That they will not put off their Cloaths before they go to Bed*, is proper enough: But a Father worn out with Age and Infirmities, and depriv'd by his Weakness and Want of Health of the common Society of Men, wrongs himself and his, to rake together a great Mass of useless Treasure. He has liv'd long enough, if he be wise, to have a Mind to strip himself to go to Bed; not to his very Shirt, I confess, but to that, and a good warm Night-gown: The remaining Pomps of which he has no further use, he ought voluntarily to surrender to those to whom by the Order of Nature they belong. 'Tis Reason he should refer the use of those Things to them, seeing that Nature has reduc'd him to such a State, that he cannot enjoy them himself: Otherwise there is doubtless ill Nature and Envy in the Case. The greatest Act of the Emperor *Charles V.* was, that in Imitation of some of the Ancients of his own Quality, confessing it but Reason to strip ourselves when our Cloaths encumber and grow too heavy for us; and to lie down when our Legs begin to fail us; he resign'd his Dignity, Grandeur, and Power to his Son, when he found the Vigour and Steadiness in the Conduct of his Affairs to fail in himself, with the Glory he had therein acquir'd.

*Solve senescentem mature sanus sequum, ne
Peccet ad extremum ridendus, & ilia ducat *.*

* *Hor. lib. 1. Ep. 1.*

The old worn Courser in good Time dismiss,
Left failing in the Lists, Spectators hiss.

This Fault of not perceiving betimes, and not being sensible of the Feebleness and extreme Alteration that Age naturally brings both upon the Body and Mind (which in my Opinion is equal, if the Soul is no more than the half) has lost the Reputation of most of the great Men in the World. I have known in my Time, and have been intimately acquainted with some Persons of very great Quality, whom a Man might easily discern so manifestly fall'n from that former Sufficiency, I was sure they were once endur'd with by the Reputation they had acquir'd in their former Years, that I could heartily, for their own Sakes, have wish'd them at Home at their Ease, discharg'd from those Publick Military Employments, which were now grown too heavy for their Shoulders. I have formerly been very familiar in a Gentleman's House, a Widower, and very old, tho' healthy and chearful enough: This Gentleman had several Daughters to marry, and a Son, already of a ripe Age, which brought upon him many Visits, and a great Expence; neither of which did very well please him, not only out of consideration of Frugality; but yet more, for having, by reason of his Age, enter'd into a Course of Life far differing from ours. I told him one Day a little boldly, as I us'd to do, that he would do better to give us room, and to leave his principal House (for he had but that well situated and furnish'd) to his Son, and retire himself to an Estate he had hard by, where no body would trouble his Repose, seeing he could not otherwise avoid being importun'd by us, the Condition of his Children consider'd. He took my Advice afterwards, and found an Advantage by so doing: I do not mean that a Man should so instate them, as not to reserve to himself a Liberty to recant: I, who am now arriv'd to the Age wherein such Things are fit to be done, would resign to them the Enjoyment of my House and Goods, but with a Power of Revocation, if they should give me Cause to alter my Mind; I would leave to them the Use, they being no longer proper for me, and of the General Authority and Power over all would reserve as much as I thought good to myself: Having always thought, that it must needs be a great Satisfaction

to an aged Father, to put his Children himself in the Way of governing his Affairs, and to have Power, during his Life, to controul their Behaviour, supplying them with Instruction and Advice from his own Experience, and himself to transfer the Ancient Honour and Order of his House into that of those who are to succeed him, and by that Means to be responsible to himself (by the Hopes he may conceive) for their future Conduct. And in order to this, I would not avoid their Company, I would observe them near at hand, and partake, according to the Condition of my Age, of their Feasts and Jollities. If I did not live amongst them (which I could not do, without being a Disturbance to them, by reason of the Moroseness of my Age, and the Restlessness of my Infirmities, and without violating also the Rules and Order of Living I should then have set down to myself) I would at least live near them in some remote Part of my House, not the best in shew, but the most commodious. Nor as I saw some Years ago, a Dean of *St. Hilaire*, of *Poitiers*, by his Melancholy given up to such a Solitude, that at the Time I came into his Chamber, it had been two and twenty Years that he had not slept one Foot out of it, and yet had all his Motions free, and eat, and was in perfect Health, saving a little Rheum that fell upon his Lungs: He would hardly once in a Week, suffer any one to come to see him; he always kept himself shut up in his Chamber alone, except a Servant that brought him once a Day something to eat, and did then but just come in and go out again. His Employment was to walk up and down, and read some Book, for he was a piece of a Scholar: But as to the rest, obstinately bent to die in his Retirement, as he presently after did. I would endeavour, by a sweet and obliging Conversation, to create in my Children a lively and unfeign'd Friendship and good Will, which in well descended Natures is not hard to do; for if they be Brutes, of which this Age of ours produces Thousands, we are then to hate and avoid them. I am angry at the Custom, very much in use, of forbidding Children to call their Father by the Name of *Father*, and to enjoyn them another, as more full of Respect and Reverence, as if Nature had not sufficiently provided for our Authority: We call *Almighty God Father*, and disdain to have our Children call us so; I have reform'd this

Error in my Family. And as it is also Folly and Injustice to deprive Children, when grown up, of a Familiarity with their Father, and to carry a scornful and austere Countenance toward them, thinking by that to keep them in Awe and Obedience; so it is but a very idle Force, that, instead of producing the Effect design'd, renders Fathers distastful; and, which is worse, ridiculous to their own Children: They have Youth and Vigour in Possession, and consequently the Breath and Favour of the World, and therefore receive these fierce and tyrannical Looks (mere Scare-Crows) of a Man without Blood, either in his Heart or Veins, with Mockery and Contempt. Tho' I could make myself fear'd, I had yet much rather make myself belov'd. There are so many Sorts of Defects in old Age, so much Impotency, and it is so liable to Contempt, that the best Purchase a Man can make, is the Kindness and Affection of his own Family: Command and Fear are no more his Weapons: Such a one I have known, who having been very insolent in his Youth, when he came to be old, tho' he might have liv'd at his full Ease and had his Judgment as entire as ever, would yet torment himself and others: strike, rant, swear and curse; the most tempestuous Master in *France*: Fretting himself with unnecessary Suspicion and Vigilancy; and all this Rumble and Clutter, but to make his Family cheat him the sooner and the more: of his Barn, his Kitchen, Cellar, nay, and his very Purse too, others had the greatest Use and Share, whilst he keeps his Keys in his Bosom, much more carefully than his Eyes: Whilst he hugs himself with the Frugality of the pitiful Pittance of a wretched niggardly Table, every thing goes to Wrack and Ruin in every Corner of his House, in Play, Drink, all Sorts of Profusion; making Sports in their Junkets with his vain Anger and fruitless Parsimony. Every one is a Centinel against him, and if by accident any wretched Fellow that serves him is of another Humour, and will not join with the rest, he is presently render'd suspected to him, a Bait which old Age very easily bites at of itself. How often has this Gentleman boasted to me, in how great Awe he kept his Family, and how exact an Obedience and Reverence they paid him! How clearly did this Man see into his own Affairs!

Ille solus nescit omnia *.

I do not know any one that can muster more Parts, both natural and acquir'd, proper to maintain such a Dominion, than he; yet he is fall'n from it like a Child. For this Reason it is, that I have pick'd him out amongst several others that I know of the same Humour, for the greatest Example. It were Matter sufficient for a Question in the Schools, Whether he is better thus or otherwise? In his Presence all submit to and bow before him, and give so much way to his Vanity, that no body ever resists him; he has his Belly-full of Cringe, and all Postures of Fear, Submission and Respect. Does he turn away a Servant? He packs up his Bundle, and is gone; but 'tis no further than just out of his Sight: The Pace of old Age is so slow, and the Scene is so weak and troubled, that he will live and do his old Office in the same House a Year together, without being perceiv'd. And after a fit Interval of Time, Letters are pretended to come a great way off, from I know not where, very humble, suppliant, and full of Promises of Amendment; by Virtue of which he is again receiv'd into Favour. Does *Monsieur* make any Bargain, or send away any Dispatch that does not please? 'Tis suppress'd, and Causes afterwards forg'd to excuse the want of Execution in the one, or Answer in the other. No strange Letters are first brought to him; he never sees any, but those that seem fit for his Knowledge: If by Accident they fall first into his own Hand, being us'd to trust some body to read them to him, he reads *extempore* what he thinks fit, and very often makes such a one ask him Pardon, who abuses and rails at him in his Letter. Finally, he sees nothing but by an Image prepar'd and design'd before-hand, and the most satisfactory they can invent, not to rouse and awake his ill Humour and Choler. I have under different Forms, seen enough of long and constant OEconomy to just the same Effect. Women, especially the perverse and elder Sort, are evermore addicted to cross their Husbands: They lay hold with both Hands on all Occasions to contradict and oppose them, and the first Excuse serves for a plenary Justification. I have seen a Wife who has grossly

* *Ter. Adel. Act. 4. Sce. 2.*

purloin'd from her Husband, that, as she told her Confessor, she might distribute the more liberal Alms: Let who will trust to that Religious Dispensation. No Management of Affairs seems to them of sufficient Dignity, if proceeding from the Husband's Assent; they must usurp either by Insolence or Cunning, and always injuriously, or else it has not the Grace of that Authority they desire: When, as in the Case I am speaking of, 'tis against a poor old Man, and for the Children, that they make use of this Title to serve their Passion with Glory; and, as in a common Servitude, easily monopolize against his Government and Dominion. If they be Males grown up, and flourishing, they presently corrupt, either by Force or Favour, both Steward, Receivers, and all the Rout. Such as have neither, Wife nor Son, do not so easily fall into this Misfortune; when they do, it is more cruelly and undeservedly. *Cato* the elder, in his Time, said, *So many Servants, so many Enemies*. Consider then, whether, according to the vast difference betwixt the Purity of the Age he liv'd in, and the Corruption of this of ours, he does not seem to advertise us, that Wife, Son, and Servant, are so many Enemies to us? 'Tis well for old Age, that it is always accompany'd with Stupidity, Ignorance, and a Facility of being deceiv'd; for should we see how we are us'd, and would not acquiesce, what would become of us? especially in such

The Author seems to hint that the Judges were young Men themselves.

an Age as this, where the very Judges who are to determine, are usually partial to the Young, in any Cause that comes before them. In case that the Discovery of this Cheat escape me, I cannot at least fail to discern that I am very fit to be cheated; and can a Man ever enough speak the Value of a Friend, in comparison with these civil Tyes? The very Image of it which I see so pure and uncorrupted in Beasts, how religiously do I respect it? If others deceive me, yet I do not at least deceive myself, in thinking I am able to defend myself from them, or in breaking my Brains to make myself so? I protect myself from such Treasons in my own Bosom, not by an unquiet and tumultuary Curiosity, but rather by Mirth and Resolution. When I hear talk of any one's Condition, I never trouble myself to think of him, I presently turn my Eyes upon myself,

myself, to see in what Condition I am ; whatever concerns another relates to me ; the Accident that has befallen him, gives me caution, rouzes me to turn my Defence that Way. We every Day and every Hour say Things of another, that we might more properly say of ourselves, could we but revert our Observations to our own Concerns, as well as extend it to others. And several Authors have in this manner prejudic'd their own Cause, by running headlong upon those they attack, and darting those Shafts against their Enemies, that are more properly, and with greater Advantage to be return'd upon them. The last Marechal de Monluck, having lost his Son, who was slain at the Isle of Maderas ; in truth a very brave Gentleman, and of great Expectation, did to me amongst his other Regrets, very much insist upon what a Sorrow and Heart-breaking it was, that he had never made himself familiar and acquainted with him ; and by that Humour of Fatherly Gravity and Sourness, to have lost the Opportunity of having an Insight into, and of well knowing, his Son ; as also of letting him know the extreme Affection he had for him, and the worthy Opinion he had of his Virtue. *That poor Man, said he, never saw in me other than a stern and disdainful Countenance, and is gone in a Belief, that I neither knew how to love or esteem him according to his Desert. For whom did I reserve the Discovery of that singular Affection I had for him in my Soul? Was it not he himself who ought to have had all the Pleasure of it, and all the Obligation? I forc'd and wrack'd myself to put on and maintain this vain Disguise, and have by that means depriv'd myself of the Pleasure of his Conversation, and, I doubt, in some measure of his Affection ; which could not but be very cold towards me, having never other from me than Austerity ; nor felt other than a tyrannical Manner of Proceeding.* I find this Complaint to be rational and rightly apprehended ; for as I myself know by too certain Experience, that there is not so sweet a Consolation in the loss of Friends, as the Conscioufness of having had no Reserve of Secret for them ; and to have had with them a perfect and entire Communication. Oh my Friend ! am I the better for being sensible of this ; or am I the worse ? I am doubtless much the better. I am comforted and honour'd in the Sorrow for his Death. Is it not a pious, a pleasing Office of
my

my Life to be always upon my Friend's Obsequies? Can there be any Joy equal to this Privation; I open myself to my Family, as much as I can, and very willingly let them know, in what State they are in my Opinion and good Will, as I do to every body else. I make haste to bring out, and expose myself to them; for I will not have them mistaken

The ancient Gauls never permitted their Sons to present themselves before them till they came to bear Arms.

in me in any Thing. Amongst other particular Customs of our ancient *Gauls*, this, as *Cæsar* reports, was one, *That the Sons never presented themselves before their Fathers, nor durst ever appear in their Company in publick, till they began to bear Arms;* as if they would intimate by that, that it was also time for their Familiarity and Acquaintance. I have observ'd yet another sort of Indiscretion in Fathers of my Time, That not contented with having depriv'd their Children during their own long Lives, of the Share they naturally ought to have had in their Fortunes, they after leave to their Wives the same Authority over their Estates, and Liberty to dispose of them according to their own Fancy: and I have known a certain Lord, one of the principal Officers of the Crown, who having in his Prospect, by Right of Succession, above Fifty thousand Crowns yearly Revenue, dy'd necessitous, and overwhelm'd with Debt, at above 50 Years of Age; his Mother, in his extreamest Decrepitude and Necessity, being yet in Possession of all his Goods by the Will of his Father, who had, for his part, liv'd till near 80 Years old. This appears by no means reasonable to me: And therefore I think it of very little Advantage to a Man, whose Affairs are well enough, to seek a Wife that will charge his Estate with too great a Jointure: There being no sort of foreign Debt or Incumbrance, that brings greater and more frequent Ruin to Estates and Families than that. My Predecessors have ever been aware of that Danger, and provided against it, and so have I: But those who dissuade us from Rich Wives, for fear they should be less tractable and kind, are out in their Advice, to make a Man lose a real Convenience for so frivolous a Conjecture. It costs a reasonable Woman no more to pass over one Wrong, than another. They love but where they have the most Reason. Injustice

justice allures them, as the Honour of their virtuous Actions does the good; and the more Riches they bring with them, they are thereby so much the more gentle and sweet-natur'd; as Women who are fair, are more inclin'd, and proud to be chaste. 'Tis reasonable to leave the Administration of Affairs to the Mothers during the Minority of the Children; but the Father has brought them up very ill, if he cannot hope, that when they come to Maturity, they will have more Wisdom and Dexterity in the Management of Affairs than his Wife, considering the ordinary Weakness of the Sex. It were notwithstanding, to say the Truth, more against Nature, to make the Mothers depend upon the Discretion of their Children: They ought to be plentifully provided for, to maintain themselves according to their Quality and Age, by reason that Necessity is much more indecent and insupportable to them, than to Men; and therefore the Son is rather to be cut short, than the Mother. In general, the most judicious Distribution of our Goods, when we come to die, is, in my Opinion, to let them be distributed according to the Custom of the Country. The Laws have consider'd it better than we know how to do, and 'tis better to let them fail in their Election, than rashly to run the Hazard of miscarrying in ours. Neither are they properly ours, since, by a civil Prescription, and without us, they are all judg'd to certain Successors. And altho' we have some Liberty beyond that, yet I think we ought not, without great and manifest Cause, to take away that from one, which his Fortune has allotted him, and to which the Publick Equity gives him Title; and that it is against Reason to abuse this Liberty, in making it serve our own frivolous and private Fancies. My Destiny has been kind to me, in not furnishing me with Occasions to tempt and divert my Affection from the common and legitimate Institution. I see well enough, with whom 'tis Time lost, to employ a long Diligence of good Offices: a Word ill taken obliterates ten Years Merit; and he is happy, who is in a Condition to oil their Good Will at this last Passage. The last Action carries it: Not the best, and most frequent Offices, but the most recent and present to the Work. These are People that play with their Wills, as with Apples and Rods, to gratify or chastise every Action of those, that pretend to an Interest in them.

'Tis

'Tis a Thing of two great Weight and Consequence to be so tumbled and toss'd, and alter'd every Moment: And wherein the wise Men of the World determine once for all, having therein, above all Things, a Regard to Reason, and is what is publickly observ'd. We also lay these Masculine Substitutions too much to Heart, proposing a ridiculous Eternity to our Names. We are, moreover, too superstitious in the vain Conjectures of Futurity, which we derive from those little Observations we make of the Words and Actions of Children. Perhaps, they might have done me an Injustice, in disposseing me of my Right, for having been the most dull and heavy, the most slow and unwilling at my Book, not of all my Brothers only, but of all the Boys in the whole Province: Whether about learning my Lesson, or any bodily Exercise. 'Tis a Folly to make an extraordinary Election upon the Credit of these Divinations, wherein we are so often deceiv'd. If the Rule of Primogeniture were to be violated, and the Destinies corrected in the Choice they have made of our Heirs, one might more plausibly do it, upon the Account of some enormous personal Deformity; a constant and incorrigible Vice, in the Opinion of us *French*, who are great Admirers of Beauty, of important Prejudice. The pleasant Dialogue betwixt *Plato's* Legislator and his Citizens, will be an Ornament to this Place. *What*, said they, feeling themselves about to die, *may we not dispose of our own to whom we please? Good God, what Cruelty! That it shall not be lawful for us, according as we have been serv'd and attended in our Sickness, in old Age, and other Affairs, to give more or less to those whom we have found most diligent about us, at our own Fancy and Discretion!* To which the Legislator answers thus: *My Friends, who are now, without Question, very soon to die, it is hard for you, in the Condition you are, either to know yourselves, or what is yours, according to the Delphick Inscription. I, who make the Laws, am of Opinion, that you neither are yourselves your own, neither is that yours of which you are possess'd. Both your Goods and you belong to your Families, as well those past as those to come; but yet, both your Family and Goods do much more appertain to the Publick. Wherefore, lest any Flatterer in your Age, or in your Sickness, or any Passion of your own, should unseasonably prevail with you to make an unjust Will, I shall take Care to prevent that*
Inconve-

Inconvenience. But having Respect both to the universal Interest of the City, and that of your particular Family, shall establish Laws, and make it by lively Reasons appear, that a particular Convenience ought to give Place to the common Benefit. Go then chearfully where human Necessity calls you. It belongs to me, who have no more Respect to one thing than another; and who, as much as in me lies, am careful of the publick Concern, to take Care of what you leave behind you.

To return to my Subject; it appears to me, that such Women are very rarely born to whom the Prerogative over Men, the Maternal and Natural excepted, is in any sort due; unless it be for the Punishment of such as in some lustful Humour have voluntarily submitted themselves to them: But that does nothing concern the old ones, of which we are now speaking. This Consideration it is which has made us so willing to forge and give Force to a Law which was never yet seen by any one; and by which Women are excluded the Succession *The Salick Law never seen by any* to this Crown; and there is hardly a Government in the World where it is not pleaded as 'tis here, by meer Reason of the Thing that gives it Authority, tho' Fortune has given it more Credit in some Places than in others. 'Tis dangerous to leave the Disposal of our Succession to their Judgment, according to the Choice they shall make of Children, which is often fantastick and unjust; for the irregular Appetite and deprav'd Taste they have, during the Time of their being with Child, they have at all other Times in the Mind. We commonly see them fond of the most weak, ricketty, and deform'd Children; or of those, if they have such, as are hanging at their Breasts. For not having sufficient Force of Reason to chuse and embrace that which is most worthy, they the more willingly suffer themselves to be carry'd away, where the Impressions of Nature are most alone: Like Animals that know their Young no longer than they give them suck. As to what remains, it is easy by Experience to be discern'd, that this natural Affection, to which we give so great Authority, has but a very weak and shallow Root. For a very little Profit we every Day ravish their own Children out of their Mothers Arms, and make them take ours in their room: We make them abandon their own to some pitiful Nurse, to which we disdain to commit ours, or to some She-Goat: Forbidding

Forbidding them, not only to give them suck, what Danger soever they run thereby, but moreover, to take any Manner of Care of them, that they may wholly be taken up with the Care of, and Attendance upon, ours. And we see in most of them an adulterate Affection, begot by Custom toward the Foster Children, more vehement than the natural; and greater Solitude for the Preservation of those they have taken Charge of, than their own. And that which I was saying of Goats, was upon this Account; that it is ordinary, all about where I live, to see the Country-women, when they want suck of their own, to call Goats to their Assistance. And I have, at this Hour, two Footmen that never suck'd Women's Milk more than eight Days after they were born. These Goats are immediately taught to come to suckle the little Children, well knowing their Voices when they cry, and come running to them; when if any other than that they are acquainted with be presented to them, they refuse to let it suck; and the Child to any other Goat will do the same. I saw one the other Day, from whom they had taken away the Goat that us'd to nourish it, by reason the Father had only borrow'd it of a Neighbour, that would not touch any other they could bring, and doubtless dy'd of Hunger. Beasts do as easily alter and corrupt their natural Affections as we: I believe, that in what *Herodotus* relates of a certain Place of *Lybia*, there are very many Mistakes; he says, *That the Women are there in common, but that the Child, so soon as it can go, finds him out in the Crowd for his Father, to whom he is first led by his natural Inclination.* Now, let us consider how simple a Reason it is to love our Children, or call them our Second-Selves, only because we have begot them. It appears, methinks, that there is another kind of Production proceeding from us, that should no less recommend them to our Love: For that which we engender by the Soul, the Issue of our Understanding, Courage and Abilities, springs from nobler Parts than those of the Body, and that are much more our own. We are both Father and Mother in this Generation; these cost us a great deal more, and bring us more Honour, if they have any Thing of Good in them. For the Value of other Children is much more theirs than ours; the Share we have in them is very little;

Goats train'd to give suck to Children.

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little; but of these, all the Beauty, all the Grace and Value is ours; as also, they more lively represent and resemble us than the rest. *Plato* adds, that those are Immortal Children that immortalize and deify their Fathers, as *Lycurgus*, *Solon* and *Minos*. Now Histories being full of Examples of the common Affection of Fathers to their Children, it seems not altogether improper to introduce some few also of this other kind. *Heliodorus*, that good Bishop of *Tricea*, rather chose to lose the Dignity, Profit and Devotion of so venerable a Prelacy, than to lose his Daughter; a Daughter that continues to this Day very graceful and comely; but notwithstanding, peradventure, a little too curiously and wantonly set off, and too amorous for an Ecclesiastic and Sacerdotal Daughter. There has been one *Labienus* at *Rome*, a Man of great Valour and Authority; and, amongst other good Qualities, excellent in all Sorts of Literature; who was, as I take it, the Son of that Great *Labienus*, the chiefest of *Cæsar's* Captains, in the Wars of *Gaul*; and who, afterwar's siding with *Pompey* the Great, so valiantly maintain'd his Cause, 'till he was by *Cæsar* defeated in *Spain*. This *Labienus*, of whom I am now speaking, had several Enemies, who were emulous of his Virtue; and 'tis likely the Courtiers and Minions of the Emperor of his Time, who were very angry at, and displeas'd with his Freedom and Paternal Humours, which he yet retain'd against Tyranny, with which, it is to be suppos'd, he had tinctur'd his Books and Writings. His Adversaries, before the Magistracy of *Rome*, prosecuted several Pieces he had publish'd, and prevail'd so far against him, as to have them condemn'd to the Fire. It was in him that this new Example of Punishment was begun, which was afterwards continu'd against several others at *Rome*, to punish even Writing and Studies with Death. There would not be Means and Matter enough of Cruelty, did we not mix with them Things that Nature has exempted from all Sense and Suffering; as Reputation, and the Products of Wit; and communicate corporeal Punishments to the Learning and Monuments of the *Muses*. Now *Labienus* could not suffer this Loss, nor survive these his so dear Issue; and therefore caus'd himself to be convey'd and shut up alive in

Books Immortal Children.

His Romance of Theagines and Cariclea.

the Monument of his Ancestors, where he made shift to kill and bury himself at once. 'Tis hard to shew a more violent Paternal Affection than this. *Cassius Severus*, a Man of great Eloquence, and his very intimate Friend, seeing his Books burn, cry'd out, *That by the same Sentence they should as well condemn him to the Fire too, being that he carry'd in his Memory all that they contain'd.* The like Accident befel *Geruntus Cordus*, who being accus'd for having in his Books commended *Brutus* and *Cassius*; that dirty, servile and degenerated Senate, and worthy a worse Master than *Tiberius*, condemn'd to the Flame. He was willing to bear them Company, and kill'd himself with fasting. The good *Lucan* being condemn'd by that Monster *Nero*, at the last Gaspe of his Life, when the greater Part of his Blood was already gone by the Veins of his Arms, which he had caus'd his Physician to open to make him dye, and that the Cold had seiz'd on all his Extremities, and began to approach his vital Parts; the last thing he had in his Memory, was, some of his Verses of the Battle of *Pharsalia*, which he repeated and dy'd with them in his Mouth. What was this but taking a tender and Paternal Leave of his Children, in Imitation of the Farewell Blessings and Embraces wherewith we part with ours, when we come to die; and an Effect of that Natural Inclination that suggests to our Remembrance in this Extremity, those Things which were dearest to us during the Time of our Life? Can we believe that *Epicurus*, who, as he says himself, dying of intolerable Pains of the Colick, had all his Consolation in the Beauty of the *Doctrine* he left behind him, could have receiv'd the same Satisfaction from many Children, tho' never so well educated, had he had them, as he did from the Issue of so many rich and admirable Writings? Or that, had it been in his Choice to have left behind him a deform'd and untoward Child, or a foolish and ridiculous Book, he, or any other Man of his Understanding, would not rather have chose to have run the first Misfortune than the other? It had been (for Example) perhaps, an Impiety in *St. Austin*, if on the one Hand, it had been propos'd to him to bury his Writings, from which Religion has receiv'd so great Advantage; or on the other, to bury his Children, had he had them, had he

Cordus's
Writings
condemn'd to
the Fire.

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he not rather chose to bury his Children? And I know not whether I had not much rather have begot a very beautiful one, thro' my Society with the *Muses*, than by laying with my Wife. To this, such as it is, what I give it, I give it absolutely and irrevocably, as Men do to their bodily Children. That little I have done for it, is no more at my own Disposal. It may know many things that are gone from me, and from me keep that which I have not retain'd: And that, as a Stranger, I might borrow thence, should I stand in need. If I am wiser than my Book, it is richer than I. There are few Men addicted to Poetry, who would not be much prouder to be Father to the *Aeneid*, than to the handsomest and best made Youth of *Rome*, and that would not much better bear the Loss of the one than the other. For, according to *Aristotle*, the Poet, of all Sorts of Artificers, is fondest of his Work. 'Tis hard to believe, that *Epaminondas*, who boasted, that in Lieu of all Posterity, he left two Daughters behind him, which would one Day do their Father Honour (meaning the two Victories he obtain'd over the *Lacedæmonians*) would willingly have consented to exchange those for the most beautiful Creature of all *Greece*: Or that *Alexander*, or *Cæsar*, ever wish'd to be depriv'd of the Grandeur of their glorious Exploits in War, for the Conveniency of Children and Heirs, how perfect and accomplish'd soever. Nay, I make no great Question, whether *Phidias*, or any other excellent Statuary, would be so solicitous of the Preservation and Continuance of his Natural Children, as he would be of a rare Statue, which with long Labour and Study, he had perfected according to Art. And to those furious and irregular Passions that have sometimes flam'd in Fathers towards their own Daughters, and in Mothers towards their own Sons; the like is also found in this other Sort of Parentry: Witness what is related of *Pygmalion*, who having made the Statue of a Woman of singular Beauty, fell so passionately in love with this Work of his, that the Gods, in Favour of his Passion, must inspire it with Life.

*Tentatum mollescit ebur, positoque rigore,
Subfidit digitis*.*

* *Ovid. Met. lib. 10.*

The tempted Ivory pliant grows, and now,
Under his wanton Touch, does yield and bow.



C H A P. IX.

Of the Arms of the Parthians.

TIS an ill Custom, and a little unmanly, which the Gentlemen of our Time have got, not to put on their Armour, but just upon the point of the most extreme Necessity; and to lay it by again as soon as ever there is any Shew of the Danger being a little over; from whence many Disorders arise: For every one bustling and running to his Arms, just when he should go to charge, has his Cuirass to buckle on, when his Companions are already put to rout. Our Ancestors were wont to give their Head-piece, Lance and Gauntlet to carry, but never put off their other Pieces so long as there was any Work to be done. Our Troops are now cumber'd and render'd unfighty, with the Clutter of Baggage and Servants, that cannot be from their Masters by reason they carry their Arms. Titus Livius, speaking of our Nation, *Intolerantissima Laborum Corpora vix Arma Humeris gerebant* *. Their Bodies were so impatient of Labour, that they could scarce endure to wear their Arms. Many Nations do yet, and did anciently go to War without defensive Arms; or such, at least, as were of very little Proof.

Tegmina queis Caputum raptus de Subere Cortex †.

For Helmets they their Temples only bind
With a light Skull, made of the Cork-tree Rind.

Alexander, the most adventurous Captain that ever was, very seldom wore Armour; and such amongst us as slight it, do not by that much harm the main Concern; for we see some kill'd for want of it, there are few less who the Lumber of Armour helps to destroy, either by being

* *Liv. lib. 5.*

† *Æneid, lib. 6.*