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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. 28. All Things have their Season.

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entreated, taking upon himself the Blame of all their evil Actions, to drink his Blood, and caused twenty of his most favoured Captains to feed upon him, tearing his Flesh in Pieces with their Teeth, and swallowing the Morsels. The Remainder of his Body and Bowels, so soon as he was dead, were boiled, and others of his Followers compelled to eat them.



## C H A P. XXVIII.

*All Things have their Season.*

SUCH as compare Cato the Censor, with the younger Cato that kill'd himself, compare two beautiful Natures, and much resembling one another. The First acquir'd his Reputation several Ways, and excells in Military Exploits, and the Utility of his publick Vocations; but the Virtue of the Younger, besides, that it were Blasphemy to compare any to him in Vigour, was much more pure and unblemish'd. For who can acquit the Censor of Envy and Ambition, having dared to jostle the Honour of Scipio, a Man in Worth, Valour and all other excellent Qualities, infinitely beyond him, or any other of his Time? That which they report of him, amongst other Things, That in his extreme Old Age, he put himself upon learning the Greek Tongue with so greedy an Appetite, as if to quench a long Thirst, does not seem to make much for his Honour; it being properly what we call being twice a Child. *All Things have their Season*, even the best, and a Man may say his Pater-noster out of Time; as they accused T. Quintus Flaminus, that being General of an Army, he was seen praying apart in the Time of a Battle that he won.

*Imponet finem sapiens, & rebus honestis\*.*

The wise Man limits even decent Things.

Eudemondas, seeing Xenocrates, when very old, still very intent upon his School-Lectures, *When will this Man be*

\* *Juven. Sat. 6.*

wise, said he, *he does yet learn?* And *Philopæmen*, to those who extoll'd King *Ptolemy* for every Day inuring his Person to the Exercise of Arms; *it is not*, said he, *commendable in a King of his Age to exercise himself in those Things, he ought now really to employ them.* The Young are to make their Preparations, the Old to enjoy them, say the Sages: And the greatest Vice they observe in us, is, *That our Desires incessantly grow Young again*: We are always re-beginning to live. Our Studies and Desires should sometimes be sensible of Age; but we have one Foot in the Grave, and yet our Appetites and Pursuits spring every Day new upon us.

*Tu secunda marmora  
Locas sub ipsum funus, & sepulchri  
Immemor, struis domos\*.*

When Death, perhaps, is near at Hand,  
Thou fairest Marbles dost command,  
Be cut for Use; yet do'st neglect  
Thy Grave, and Houses still erect.

The longest of my Designs is not above a Year's Extent; I think of nothing now but ending, rid myself of all new Hopes and Enterprizes; take my last leave of every Place I depart from, and every Day dispossess myself of what I have. *Olim jam nec perit quicquam mihi, nec acquiritur: Plus superest viatici, quam viae †.* Henceforward I will neither lose nor expect to get: I have more wherewith to defray my Journey than I have Way to go.

*Vixi, & quem dederat cursum fortuna peregi †.*

I've liv'd, and finish'd the Career  
Wherein my Fortune plac'd me here.

To conclude; 'tis the only Comfort I find in my old Age, that it mortifies in me several Cares and Desires, wherewith my Life has been disturb'd; the Care how the World goes, the Care of Riches, of Grandeur, of Knowledge, of Health and myself. There are some who are learning to speak at a Time when they should learn to be silent for ever. A Man may always study, but he must not always go to School. What a contemptible Thing is an old School-boy!

\* *Hor. l. 2. Ode 18.* † *Sen. Epist.* † *Æneid. l. 4. Diversos*

*Diversos diversa juvant, non omnibus annis,  
Omnia conveniunt \*.*

For several Things do several Men delight;  
And all Things are not for all Ages right.

If we must study, let us study what is fuitable to our present Condition, that we may answer as he did, who being ask'd to *what End he studied in his decrepid Age?*

*What ought to be an old Man's Study.* That I may go out better, said he, and at greater Ease. Such a Study was that of the younger Cato, feeling his End approach, and which he met with in *Plato's*

Discourse of the *Immortality of the Soul*: Not as we are to believe, that he was not long before-hand furnished with all Sorts of Ammunition for such a Departure; for of Assurance, an established Will and Instruction, he had more than *Plato* had in all his Writings; his Knowledge and Courage were in this Respect above *Philosophy*. He apply'd himself to his Study, not for the Service of his Death, but as a Man whose Sleeps were never disturb'd in the Importance of such a Deliberation, he also, without Choice or Change, continued his Studies with the other accustomary Actions of his Life. The Night that he was deny'd the *Prætorship*, he spent in *Play*. That wherein he was to die, he spent in *Reading*. The Loss either of Life or of Office was all one to him.



## C H A P. XXIX.

### *Of Virtue.*

**I** Find, by Experience, that there is a vast Difference betwixt the Starts and Sallies of the Soul, and a resolute and constant Habit; and very well perceive there is nothing we may not do; nay, even to the surpassing the Divinity itself, says a certain Person, forasmuch as it is

\* *Gall. Eleg.*