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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

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Chap. 37. Of the Resemblance of Children to their Fathers.

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was to them upon Necessity afterward to restore him to his Command, and then to see how much upon him depended their Safety and Honour: Victory like a Shadow attending him wherever he went; and indeed the Prosperity of his Country, as being from him deriv'd, died with him.



C H A P. XXXVII.

Of the Resemblance of Children to their Fathers.

THIS fagotting up of divers Pieces, is so oddly compos'd, that I never set Pen to Paper, but when I have too much idle Time, and never any where but at Home; so that it is compil'd at several Interruptions and Intervals, as Occasions keep me sometimes many Months abroad. As to the rest, I never correct my first by any second Conceptions; perhaps I may alter a Word or so; but 'tis only to vary the Phrase, and not to destroy my former Meaning. I have a mind to represent the Progress of my Humour, that every one may see every Piece as it came from the *Forge*. I could wish I had begun sooner, and had taken more Notice of the Course of my Mutations. A Servant of mine, that I employ'd to transcribe for me, thought he had got a Prize by stealing several Pieces from me, wherewith he was best pleas'd; but it is my Comfort, that he will be no greater a Gainer, than I shall be a Loser by the Theft. I am grown older by seven or eight Years since I begun; neither has it been without some new Acquisition: I have in that Time, by the Liberty of Years, been acquainted with the *Stone*, a long Conversation, which Time hardly wears off without some such Inconvenience. I could have been glad, that of other Infirmities, Age has to present long-liv'd Men, it had chosen some one that would have been more welcome to me, for it could not possibly have laid upon me a Disease, for which, even from my Infancy, I have had so great Horror; and it is in Truth of all the Accidents of Old Age, that of which I have

I have ever been most afraid. I have often thought with myself, that I went on too far, and that in so long a Voyage, I should at last run myself into some Disadvantage; I perceiv'd, and often declar'd, that it was time to knock off, and that Death was to be cut off in the sound and living Part, according to the *Chirurgeons* Rule in Amputations. And that *Nature* made him pay very strict Usury, who did not in due Time pay the Principal. And yet I was so far from being ready, that in eighteen Months time, or thereabout, that I have been in this uneasy Condition, I have so inur'd myself to it, as to be content to live on in it; and have found wherein to comfort myself, and to hope: So much are Men enslav'd to their miserable Being, that there is no Condition so wretched that they will not accept, provided they may live, according to that of *Mecænas*,

*Debilem facito manu,
Debilem pede coxa,
Lubricos quate dentes
Vita dum superest, bene est*.*

Maim both my Hands and Feet, break Legs and Thighs,
Knock out my Teeth, and bore out both my Eyes,
Let me but live, all's well enough, he cries.

And *Tamerlane*, with his foolish Humanity, palliated the fantastick Cruelty he exercis'd upon *Lepers*, when he put all he could hear of to Death, to deliver them, as he pretended, from the painful Life they liv'd. For there was not one of them who would not rather have undergone a triple Leprosy, than to be depriv'd of their Being. And *Antisthenes* the *Stoick*, being very sick, and crying out, *Who will deliver me from these Evils?* *Diogenes*, who was come to visit him, *This*, said he, presenting him a Knife, *presently if thou wilt: I do not mean from my Life*, he reply'd, *but from my Disease*. The Sufferings that only attack the Mind, I am not so sensible of, as most other Men; and that partly out of Judgment: For the World looks upon several Things as dreadful, or to be avoided at the Expence of Life, that are almost indifferent to me: Partly

* *Seneca Epist.* 101.

through

through a stupid and insensible Complexion I have in Accidents, which do not point-blank hit me; and that Insensibility I look upon as one of the best Parts of my natural Condition: But essential and corporeal Pains I am very sensible of. And yet having long since foreseen them, though with a Sight weak and delicate, and softened with the long and happy Health and Quiet that God has been pleas'd to give me the greatest Part of my Time, I had in my Imagination fancied them so insupportable, that in truth I was more afraid than I have since found I had Cause; by which I am still more fortified in this Belief, that most of the Faculties of the Soul, as we employ them, more trouble the Repose of Life, than they are any way useful to it. I am in Conflict with the worst, the most sudden, the most painful, the most mortal, and the most irremediable of all Diseases. *The Stone the most painful of all Diseases.* I have already had the Trial of five or six very long, and very painful Fits, and yet I either flatter myself, or there is even in this Estate what is very well to be endur'd by a Man who has his Soul free from the Fear of Death, and the Menaces, Conclusions and Consequences, which Physick is ever thundering in our Ears. But the Effect, even of Pain itself, is not so sharp and intolerable, as to put a Man of Understanding into Impatience and Despair. I have at least this Advantage by my *Stone*, that what I could not hitherto wholly prevail upon myself to resolve upon, as to reconciling and acquainting myself with Death, it will perfect; for the more it presses upon and importunes me, I shall be so much the less afraid to die. I had already gone so far, as only to love Life for Life's sake, but my Pain will dissolve this Intelligence; and God grant that in the End, should the Sharpness of it be once greater than I shall be able to bear, it does not throw me into the other less vicious Extream, to desire and wish to die.

Summam nec metuas diem, nec optes *.

Neither to wish nor fear to die.

* *Mart. l. 10. Epig. 47.*

They are two Passions to be fear'd, but the one has its Remedy much nearer at Hand than the other. As to the rest, I have always found the Precept, that so exactly enjoins a constant Countenance, and so disdainful and indifferent a Comportment in the Toleration of Infirmities, to be merely Ceremonial. Why should *Philosophy*, which only has Respect to Life and its Effects, trouble itself about these external Appearances? Let us leave that Care to *Histrions* and Masters of *Rhetorick*, that set so great a Value upon our Gestures. Let her, in God's Name, allow this vocal Frailty, if it be neither cordial nor stomachical to the Disease; and permit the ordinary ways of expressing Grief by Sighs, Sobs, Palpitations, and turning pale, that Nature has put out of our Power. And provided the Courage be undaunted, and the Expressions not founding of Despair, let her be satisfied. What great Matter is it, if we wring our Hands, if we do not wring our Thoughts? She forms us for ourselves, not for others; to be, not to seem: Let her be satisfied with governing our Understandings, which she has taken upon her the Care of instructing; that in the Fury of the Cholick she maintains the Soul in a condition to know itself, and to follow its accustom'd Way: Contending with, and enduring, not meanly truckling under Pain; mov'd and heated, not subdu'd and conquer'd in the Contention; but capable of Discourse and other Things to a certain Degree. In so extreme Accidents 'tis Cruelty to require so exact a Composedness. 'Tis no great Matter what Faces we make, if we find any Ease by it: If the Body find itself reliev'd by complaining, let him go too: If Agitation eases him, let him tumble and toss at Pleasure: If he finds the Disease evaporate (as some Physicians hold, that it helps Women in Delivery) extremely to cry out, or if it do but amuse his Torments, let him roar aloud. Let us not command his Voice to sally, but stop it not. *Epicurus* does not only forgive his Sage for crying out in Torments, but advises him to it. *Pugilis etiam quum feriant, in jaculandis caestibus ingemiscunt, quia profundenda voce omne corpus intenditur, venitque plaga vehementior* *. When Men fight with Clubs, they groan in

* Cicero *Thusc.* l. 2.

laying

laying on, because the whole Strength of Body goes along with the Voice, and the Blow is laid on with greater Force. We have enough to do to deal with the Disease, without troubling ourselves with these superfluous Rules; which I say in Excuse of those whom we ordinarily see impatient in the Assaults of this Infirmity; for as to what concerns myself, I have pass'd it over hitherto with a little better Countenance, and contented myself with grunting, without roaring out. Not, nevertheless, that I put any great Constraint upon myself to maintain this exterior Decency, for I make little Account of such an Advantage: I allow herein as much as the Pain requires, but either my Pains are not so excessive, or I have more than ordinary Patience. I complain, I confess, and am a little impatient in a very sharp Fit, but I do not arrive to such a Degree of Despair, as he who with

*Ejacum, questu, gemitu, fremitibus
Resonando multum flebiles voces refert* *.

Howling, Roaring, and a thousand Noises
Express'd his Torment in most dismal Voices.

I relish myself in the midst of my Dolor, and have always found that I was in a Capacity to speak, think, and give a rational Answer, as well as at any other Time, but not so coldly and indifferently, being troubled and interrupted by the Pain. When I am look'd upon by my Visitors to be in the greatest Torment, and that they therefore forbear to trouble me, I oft try my own Strength, and myself set some Discourse on foot, the most remote I can contrive from my present Condition. I can do any thing upon a sudden Endeavour, but it must not continue long. What pity 'tis I have not the Faculties of that Dreamer Cicero, who dreaming he was lying with a Wench, found he had discharg'd his Stone in the Sheets! My Pains do strangely disappetite me that Way. In the Intervals from this excessive Torment, when my Ureters only languish without any great Dolor, I presently feel myself in my wonted State, forasmuch as my Soul takes no other Alarm but what is sensible and corporal, which I certainly owe to

* Cicero *Thusc.* l. 2.

the Care I have had of preparing myself by Meditation against such Accidents.

————— *laborum*

*Nulla mihi nova nunc facies inopinatae surgit,
Omnia præcepi, atque animo mecum ante peregi* *.

No Face of Pain or Labour, now can rise,
Which by its Novelty can me surprize,
I've been accustom'd all Things to explore,
And been inur'd unto them long before.

I am a little roughly handled for a Learner, and with a sudden and sharp Alteration, being fall'n in an instant from a very easy and happy Condition of Life into the most uneasy and painful that can be imagin'd. For besides that it is a Disease very much to be fear'd in itself, it begins with me after a more sharp and severe Manner than it uses to do with other Men. My Fits come so thick upon me, that I am scarcely ever at Ease; and yet I have hitherto kept my Mind so upright, that provided I can still continue it, I find myself in a much better Condition of Life than a thousand others, who have no Fever, nor other Disease but what they create themselves for want of Meditation. There is a certain sort of crafty Humility that springs from Presumption; as this for Example, that we confess our Ignorance in many Things, and are so courteous as to acknowledge, that there are in the Works of Nature some Qualities and Conditions that are imperceptible to us, and of which our Understanding cannot discover the Means and Causes: By this honest Declaration we hope to obtain that People shall also believe us of those that we say we do understand. We need not trouble ourselves to seek out Miracles and strange Difficulties; methinks there are such incomprehensible Wonders amongst the Things that we ordinarily see, as surpass all Difficulties of Miracles. What a wonderful Thing it is, that the Drop of Seed from which we are produc'd, should carry in itself the Impression, not only of the bodily Form, but even of the Thoughts and Inclinations of our Fathers? Where can that Drop of fluid Matter contain that infinite Number of Forms? And how

* *Aeneid. l. 6.*

can they carry on these Resemblances with so temerarious and irregular a Progress, that a Son shall be like his Great-Grandfather, the Nephew like his Uncle? In the Family of *Lepidus* at *Rome*, there were three, not successively, but by Intervals, that were born with the same Eye cover'd with a Cartilage. At *Thebes*, there was a Race that carried from their Mother's Womb the Form of the Head of a *Launce*, and who was not born so, was look'd upon as illegitimate. And *Aristotle* says, that in a certain Nation, where the Women were in common, they assign'd the Children to their Fathers by their Resemblance. 'Tis to be believ'd that I derive this Infirmary from my Father; for

*The Author's
Father af-
flicted with
the Stone.*

he died wonderfully tormented with a great Stone in his Bladder; he was never sensible of his Disease till the sixty-seventh Year of his Age, and before that had never felt any Grudging or Symptoms of it, either in his Reins, Sides, or any other Part; and had liv'd till then in a happy and vigorous state of Health, little subject to Infirmities, and continued seven Years after in this Disease, and died a very painful Death. I was born above five and twenty Years before his Disease seiz'd him, and in the Time of his most flourishing and healthful State of Body, his third Child in order of Birth: Where could his Propensity to this Disease lye lurking all that while? And he being so far from the Infirmary, how could that small Part of his Substance, carry away so great an Impression of its share? And how so conceal'd that till five and forty Years after I did begin to be sensible of it? Being the only one to this Hour, amongst so many Brothers and Sisters, and all to one Mother, that was ever troubled with it. He that can satisfy me in this Point, I will believe him in as many other Miracles as he pleases; always provided, that, as their manner is, he does not give me a *Doctrine* much more intricate and fantastick than the Thing itself, for current pay. Let the *Physicians* a little excuse the Liberty I take, for by the same Infusion, and fatal Insinuation it is that I have receiv'd a Hatred and Contempt of their *Doctrine*. The Antipathy I have against their Heart is hereditary. My *Father* liv'd threescore and fourteen Years, my *Grandfather* sixty nine, my *Great-Grandfather* almost fourscore Years, without ever tasting any

any sort of Physick; and with them whatever was not ordinary Diet, was instead of a Drug. *Physick* is grounded upon Experience and Examples, so is my Opinion. And is not this an express and very advantageous Experience? I do not know that they can find me in all their *Records* three that were born, bred, and dy'd under the same Roof, who have liv'd so long by their own Conduct. They must here of Necessity confess, *that if Reason be not, Fortune at least is, on my side*, and with *Physicians, Fortune* goes a great deal further than *Reason*; let them not take me now at a Disadvantage; let them not threaten me in the subdu'd Condition I now am, for that were Treachery. And to say Truth, I have got enough the better of them by these Domestick Examples, that they should rest satisfied. Human things are not usually so constant; it has been two hundred Years save eighteen that this Tryal has lasted, for the first of them was born in the Year 1402. 'Tis now indeed very good Reason that this Experiment should begin to fail us: Let them not therefore reproach me with the Infirmities under which I now suffer; is it not enough for my Part, that I have liv'd seven and forty Years in perfect Health; Though it should be the End of my *Career*, 'tis of the longer Sort. My *Ancestors* had an Aversion to *Physick* by some secret and natural Instinct; for the very sight of a Potion was loathsom to my Father. The *Lord of Gaviac*, my Uncle by the Father's side, a Churchman, and a Valetudinary from his Birth, and yet that made that crazy Life to hold out sixty seven Years; being once fallen into a furious Fever, it was order'd by the *Physicians*, he should be plainly told, *that if he would not make use of Help* (for so they call that which is very often quite contrary) *he would infallibly be a dead Man*. The good Man, though terrified with this dreadful Sentence, yet reply'd, *I am then a dead Man*. But *God* soon after made the Prognostick false. The youngest Brothers, which were four, and by many Years the youngest, the *Sieur de Buffaget*, was the only Man of the Family, that made use of Medicine, by reason, I suppose, of the Commerce he had with the other Arts, for he was a Counsellor, in the Court of *Parliament*, and it succeeded so ill with him, that being in outward Appearance of the strongest Constitution, he yet died before any of

the rest, the *Sieur Saint Michel* only excepted. 'Tis possible I may have deriv'd this natural *Antipathy* to Physick from them; but had there been no other Consideration in the Case, I would have endeavour'd to have overcome it. For all Conditions that spring in us without Reason, are Vicious; and is a kind of Disease that we are to wrestle with: It may be I had naturally this Propensity, but I have supported and fortified it by Arguments and Reasons which have establish'd me in the Opinion I am of. For I also hate the Consideration of refusing *Physick* for the nauseous Taste: I should hardly be of their Humour, who find Health worth purchasing by all the most painful *Cauteries* and *Incisions* that can be apply'd. And, according to *Epicurus*, I conceive, *That Pleasures are to be avoided, if greater Pains be the Consequence; and Pains to be coveted, that will terminate in greater Pleasures.* Health is a precious Thing, and indeed the only one meriting that a Man should lay out, not only his Time, Sweat, Labour, and Goods, but also his Life itself to obtain it, forasmuch as without it Life is injurious to us. Pleasure, Wisdom, Learning, and Virtue without it wither away and vanish; and in the most quaint and solid Discourses that *Philosophy* would imprint in us to the contrary, we need no more but oppose the Image of *Plato*, being struck with an Epilepsy or Apoplexy; and in this Presupposition to defy him to call the rich Faculties of his Soul to his Assistance. All Means that conduce to Health, can neither be too painful, nor too dear for me. But I have some other Appearances that make me strangely suspect all this Merchandize. I do not deny but there may be some Art, and that there are not, amongst so many Works of *Nature*, things proper for the Conservation of Health; that is most certain; I very well know that there are some Simples that moisten, and others that dry; I Experimentally know that *Radishes* are windy, and *Senna Leaves* purging; and several other such Experiences I have, which I am as sure of as I am that *Mutton* nourishes, and *Wine* warms me: And *Solon* would say, *That eating was Physick against Hunger.* I do not disapprove the Use we make of things the Earth produces, nor doubt in the least of the Power and Fertility of *Nature*, and disapprove not Application of what she affords to our Necessities: I very well see that *Pikes* and *Swallows* live

live by her *Laws*; but I mistrust the Inventions of Wit, Knowledge, and Art; to Countenance which, we have abandon'd *Nature* and her *Rules*, and wherein we keep no Bounds nor Moderation. As we call the Creation of the first *Laws* that fall into our *Hands*, *Justice*, and their Practice and Dispensation very foolish and very unjust: And as those who scoff and accuse it, cannot nevertheless wrong that noble Virtue, but only condemn the Abuse and Profanation of that sacred *Title*; so in *Physick*, I very much honour that glorious *Name*, and the End it is studied for, and what it promises to the Service of Mankind; but what it foists upon us, I neither Honour nor Esteem. In the first Place, Experience makes me dread it; for amongst all my Acquaintance I see no Race of People so soon sick, and so long before they are well, as those who take much *Physick*. Their very Health is alter'd and corrupted by their frequent Prescriptions. *Physicians* are not content to deal only with the Sick, but they will moreover corrupt Health, for fear Men should at any time escape their Authority. Do they not from a continual and perfect Health, extract Suspicion of some great Sicknes to ensue? I have been sick often enough and have always found my Sicknes easy enough to be supported (tho' I have made tryal of almost all Sorts) and as short as those of any other without their Help, or without swallowing their ill-tasted *Doses*. The Health I have is full and free, without other *Rule* or *Discipline* than my own Custom and Pleasure. Every Place serves me well enough to stay in, for I need no other Conveniences when sick, than what I must have when I am well. I never disturb myself that I have no *Physician* or *Apothecary*, nor any other Assistance, which I see most other sick Men more afflicted at, than they are with their Disease! What do they themselves shew us more Felicity and Duration in their own Lives, that may manifest to us some apparent Effect of their Skill? There is not a *Nation* in the World that has not been many Ages without *Physick*; and the first Ages, that is to say, the best and most happy, knew no such thing; and the tenth Part of the World knows nothing of it yet: Several *Nations* are ignorant of it to this Day, where Men live more Healthful and longer than we do here, and

Physick unknown to many Nations.

even amongst us the common People live well enough without it. The *Romans* were six hundred Years before they receiv'd it; and after having made Tryal of it, banish'd it from their City at the Instance of *Cato the Censor*, who made it appear how easy it was to live without it, having himself liv'd fourscore and five Years, and kept his Wife alive to an extreme old Age, not without *Physick* only, but without a *Physician*: For every thing that we find to be healthful to Life, may be call'd *Physick*. He kept his Family in Health, as *Plutarch* says, if I mistake not, with *Hare's Milk*, as *Pliny* reports, that the *Arcadians* cur'd all manner of Diseases with that of a *Cow*; and *Herodotus* says, *The Lybians generally enjoy a rare Health, by a Custom they have, after their Children are arriv'd at four Years of Age, to burn and cauterize the Veins of their Head and Temples, by which means they cut off all Defluxions of Rheums for their whole Lives.* And the Country People of our Province make use of nothing in all sorts of Distempers but the strongest Wine they can get, mixt with a great deal of *Saffron* and *Spice*, and all with the same Success. And to say the Truth, of all this Diversity and Confusion of *Apothecary's Bills* what other End and Effect is there after all, but to purge the *Belly*? Which a thousand ordinary Simples will do as well; and I do not know whether such Evacuations be so much to our Advantage, as they pretend, and whether *Nature* does not require a Residence of her Excrements to a certain Proportion, as Wine does of its Lees, to keep it alive. You often see healthful Men fall into Vomitings and Fluxes of the *Belly* by unknown Accidents, and make a great Evacuation of Excrements, without any preceeding Need, or any following Benefit, but rather with hurt to their Constitution. 'Tis from the great *Plato* that I lately learn'd, *That of three sorts of Motions which are natural to us, Purging is the worst; and that no Man, unless he be a Fool, ought to take any thing to that purpose, but in the extreamest Necessity:* Men disturb and irritate the Disease by contrary Oppositions. It must be the Way of living that must gently dissolve, and bring it to its Maturity. The violent Gripings and Contest betwixt the *Drug* and the *Disease* is ever to our Loss, since the Combat is fought within ourselves, and that the *Drug* is an Assitant not to be trusted, being by its own Nature an Enemy

my

my to our Health; and but by Trouble has no access into our Condition. Let it alone a little: The Providence that takes care of *Fleas* and *Moles*, does also take care for *Men*, if they will have the same Patience *Fleas* and *Moles* have, to leave it to itself. 'Tis to much purpose that we cry out upon it, 'tis the Way to make us hoarse, but not to hasten it. 'Tis a proud and uncompassionate Order, our Fears, our Despair, displeases and stops it from, instead of inviting it to, our Relief. It owes Assistance to the Disease, as well as to Health; and will not suffer itself to be corrupted in Favour of the one, to the Prejudice of the others Right, for it would then fall into Disorder. Let us in God's Name follow it. It leads those that follow, and those who will not follow, it drags along with their Fury and Physick together. Order a *Purge for your Brain*, it will there be much better employ'd, than upon your *Stomach*. One asking a *Lacedæmonian*, who had made him live so long? He made answer, *the Ignorance of Physick*. And the Emperor *Adrian* continually exclaim'd as he was dying, *That the Croud of Physicians had kill'd him*. An ill Wrestler turn'd *Physician*: *Courage*, says *Diogenes* to him, *thou hast done well, for now thou wilt throw those who have formerly thrown thee*. But they have this Advantage, according to *Nicocles*, *That the Sun gives Light to their Success, and the Earth covers their Failures*: And besides they have a very advantageous Way of making use of all Sorts of Events: For what *Fortune*, *Nature*, or any other *Causes* (of which the Number is infinite) produce of good and healthful in us, it is the Privilege of *Physick* to attribute to itself. All the happy Successes that happen to the Patient must be deriv'd from thence. The Occasions that have cur'd me, and thousand others, *Physicians* usurp to themselves, and their own Skill: And as to ill Accidents, they either absolutely disown them, in laying the Fault upon the *Patient*, by such frivolous and idle Reasons as they can never be to seek for; as he lay with his Arms out of Bed, or he was disturb'd by the Rattling of a Coach:

— Rhedarum transitus arcto
Vicorum inflexu *:

* *Juvenal. Sat. 3.*

He heard the Wheels and Horses trampling Feet
In the straight Turning of a narrow Street,

Or, *somebody had set open the Casement, or he had lain upon his left side: Or had had some odd Fancies in his Head: In sum, a Word, a Dream, or a Look, seem to them Excuse sufficient wherewith to palliate their own Errors: Or, if they so please, they yet make use of their growing worse, and do their Business that way which can never fail them: Which is, by buzzing us in the Ears, when the Disease is more inflam'd by their Medicaments, that it had been much worse but for those Remedies.* He who, for an ordinary Cold, they have thrown into a double *Tertian-Ague*, had but for them been a continued *Fever*. They do not much care what Mischief they do, since it turns to their own Profit. In earnest, they have reason to require a very favourable Belief from their Patience, and indeed it ought to be a very easy one to swallow things so hard to be believ'd. *Plato* said very well, *That Physicians were the only Men that might lye at Pleasure, since our Health depends upon the Vanity and Falsity of their Promises.*

Æsop, a most excellent *Author*, and of whom few Men discover all the Graces, does pleasantly represent to us the tyrannical Authority *Physicians* usurp over poor Creatures, weakned and subdu'd by Sicknes and Fear; for he tells us, *That a sick Person being ask'd by his Physician what Operation he found of the Potion he had given him? I have sweat very much, says the sick Man; that's good says the Physician; another time, having ask'd him how he felt himself after his Physick? I have been very cold, and have had a great Shivering upon me, said he; that is good reply'd the Physician: After the third Potion, he ask'd him again how he did? Why I find myself swell'd and puff'd up, said he, as if I had a Dropsy; That is very well, said the Physician.* One of his Servants coming presently after to enquire how he felt himself? *Truly Friend*, said he, *with being too well I am about to die.* There was a more just Law in *Egypt*, by which the *Physician* for the three first Days was to take charge of his Patient, at the Patient's own Peril and Fortune: But those three Days being past, it was to be at his own. For what Reason is it, that their Patron
Æsculapius

Æsculapius should be struck with Thunder for restoring *Hyppolitus* from Death to Life,

*Nam Pater Omnipotens aliquem indignatus ab umbris
Mortalem infernis, ad lumina surgere vitæ
Ipse repertorem medicinæ talis, & artis
Fulmine Phæbigenam stygias detrusit ad undas* *.

For *Jupiter*, offended at the Sight
Of one he had struck dead, restor'd to light,
He struck the Artist durst it undertake
With his fork'd Lightning to the *Stygian* Lake.

and his Followers he pardoned, who send so many Souls from Life to Death? A Physician boasting to *Nicocles*, *That his Art was of great Authority: It is so indeed*, said *Nicocles*, *that can with Impunity kill so many People*. As to what remains, had I been of their Counsel, I would have render'd my Discipline more sacred and mysterious; they had begun well, but they have not ended so. It was a good Beginning to make *Gods* and *Dæmons* the Authors of their *Science*, and to have us'd a peculiar way of speaking and writing. And notwithstanding, that *Philosophy* concludes it Folly to persuade a Man to his own good by an unintelligible way: *Ut si quis medicus imperet ut sumat, terribigenam, herbigradam, domiportam, sanguine cassum* †. As if a Physician should command his Patient to take Snails by unknown Names and Epithets. It was a good Rule in their Art, which accompanies all other vain, fantastick, and supernatural Arts, that the Patients Belief shou'd prepossess them with good Hope and Assurance of their Effects and Operation. A Rule they hold to that Degree, as to maintain that the most inexpert and ignorant Physician is more proper for a Patient that has Confidence in him, than the most Learned and Experienc'd, that he is not acquainted with. Nay, even the Choice of most of their Drugs is in some sort Mysterious and Divine. The left Foot of a *Tortoise*, the Urine of a *Lizard*, the Dung of an *Elephant*, the Liver of a *Mole*, Blood drawn from under the Wing of a White Pidgeon; and for us who have the Stone (so scornfully they use us in our Miseries) the Excrement of *Rats* beaten to Powder, and

* *Æneid. lib. 7.*

† *Cicero de Divin. lib. 2.*

such like Trash and Fooleries, which rather carry a Face of Magical Enchantment, than any solid Science. I omit the *odd Number* of their *Pills*, the Appointment of certain Days and Feasts of the Year, the Superstition of gathering their *Simples* at certain Hours: and that austere grim Countenance and haughty Carriage which *Pliny* himself so much derides. But they have, as I said, fail'd, in that they have not added to this fine Beginning, the making their Meetings and Consultations more religious and secret, where no profane Person ought to be admitted, no more than in the secret Ceremonies of *Æsculapius*. For by reason of this it falls out, that their Irresolution, the Weakness of their Arguments, Divination, and Foundations, the Sharpness of their Disputes, full of Hatred, Jealousy, and particular Interests, coming to be discover'd by every one, a Man must be very blind not to discern that he runs a very great Hazard in their Hands. Whoever saw one Physician approve of another's Prescription, without taking something away, or adding something to it? By which they sufficiently betray their *Art*, and make it manifest to us, that they therein more consider their own Reputation, and consequently their Profit, than their Patients Interest. He was a much wiser Man of their *Tribe*, who of old gave it for a *Rule, that only one Physician should undertake a sick Person*; for if he do nothing to purpose, one single Man's Default can bring no great Scandal upon the Profession; and on the contrary the Glory will be great, if he happen to have Success; whereas when they are many, they at every turn bring a Disrepute upon their Calling, forasmuch as they often do more Hurt than Good. They ought to be satisfied with the perpetual Disagreement which is found in the Opinions of the principal Masters, and ancient Authors of this *Science*, which is only known to Men well read, without discovering to the Vulgar the Controversies and various Judgments which they still nourish and continue amongst themselves. Shall we have one Example of the Ancient Controversies in Physick? *Hierapbilus* lodges the original Cause of all Diseases in the *Humours*; *Erisistratus*, in the *Blood of the Arteries*; *Asclepiades*, in the *invisible Atoms of the Pores*; *Alcmaeon*, in the *Exuberancy, or Defect of our bodily Strength*; *Dio-cles* in the *Equality of the Elements of which the Body is compos'd*; and in the *Quality of the Air we suck in*; *Strato*, in the

the Abundance, Crudity and Corruption of the Nourishment we take; and Hippocrates lodges them in the Spirits. There is a certain Friend of theirs, whom they know better than I, who declares upon this Subject, that the most important Science in Practice amongst us, as that which is intrusted with our Health and Conversation, is by ill Luck the greatest Misfortune, the most uncertain, the most perplex, and agitated with the greatest Mutations. There is no great Danger in mistaking the Height of the Sun, or in the Fraction of some Astronomical Supputation: But here, where our whole Being is concern'd, 'tis no Wisdom to abandon ourselves to the Mercy of the Agitation of so many contrary Winds. Before the Peloponnesian War, there was no great Talk of this Science: Hippocrates brought it into Repute; and whatever he establish'd, Chryssippus overthrew; after that, Erasistratus, Aristotle's Grand-child, overthrew what Chryssippus had writ. After these the Empiricks started up, who took a quite contrary Way to the Ancients, in the Management of this Art. When the Credit of these began a little to decay, Herapbilas set another sort of Practice on Foot, which Asclepiades in turn stood up against, and overthrew. The Opinion first of Themison, and then of Musa, and after that those of Vexius Valens, a Physician famous through the Intelligence he had with Messalina, came in vogue. The Empire of Physick in Nero's Time was establish'd in Theffalus, who abolish'd and condemn'd all that had been held till his Time. This Man's Doctrine was refuted by Crinus of Marseilles, who first brought all Medicinal Operations under the Ephemerides, and Motions of the Stars, and reduc'd Eating, Sleeping, and Drinking to Hours that were most pleasing to Mercury and the Moon. His Authority was soon after supplanted by Charinus a Physician of the same City of Marseilles; a Man that not only controverted all the ancient Methods of Physick, but moreover the Use of hot Baths, that had been generally, and so many Ages before in common Use. He made Men bath in cold Water even in Winter, and plung'd his sick Patients in the natural Waters of every Stream. No Roman till Pliny's Time had ever vouchsafed to practise Physick, that Office was only perform'd by Greeks and Foreigners, as 'tis now amongst us French, by those that sputter Latin; for, as a
great

great Physician says, *we do not easily receive the Medicine we understand, no more than we do the Drugs we ourselves gather.* If the Nations from which we fetch our *Guaicum*, *Sarsaparilla*, and *China Wood*, converse with Medicine, how great a Value must we imagine by the same Recommendation of Strangeness, Rarity, and dear Purchase, do they set upon our *Cabbage* and *Parfly*? For who would dare to contemn Things so far fetch'd, and sought out at the Hazard of so long and dangerous a Voyage?

Since the ancient Mutations in Physick, there have been infinite others down to our own Times, and for the most part such as have been infinite, entire, and universal; as those for example, produc'd by *Paracelsus*, *Fioravanti*, and *Argenterius*; for they, as I am told, do not only alter one *Receipt*, but the whole Contexture and Rules of the Body of Physick, accusing all others of Ignorance and Imposition that have practis'd before them. At this rate, in what a Condition the poor Patient must be, I leave you to judge. But if we were yet assur'd, that when they mistake themselves, that Mistake of theirs would do us no Harm, tho' it did us no Good, it were a reasonable Bargain to venture making ourselves better, without any Danger of being

*A Moor bath-
ed and purged
to clear his
Complexion.*

made worse. *Æsop* tells a Story, that one who had bought a *Morisco Slave*, believing that his black Complexion was accidental in him, and occasioned by the ill Usage of his former Master, caus'd him to enter into a Course of Physick, and with great Care to be often bath'd and purg'd: It happen'd that the Moor was nothing amended in his tawny Complexion, but he wholly lost his former Health. How often do we see Physicians impute the Death of their Patients to one another? I remember that some Years ago, there was an *Epidemical Disease*, very dangerous, and for the most part mortal, that rag'd in the *Towns* about us: The Storm being over, which had swept away an infinite Number of Men, one of the most famous Physicians of all the Country, presently after publish'd a *Book* upon that Subject, wherein, upon better Thoughts, he confesses, that the letting of Blood in that Disease was the principal Cause of so many Miscarriages. Moreover, their Authors hold, that there is no Physick that has not something hurtful in it. And if even thole of the best

best

best Operation do in some measure offend us, what must those do that are totally misapplied? For my own part, though there were nothing else in the Case, I am of Opinion, that *to those that loath the Taste of Physick, it must needs be a dangerous and prejudicial Endeavour to force it down at so incommodious a Time, and with so much Aversion; and believe that it marvellously distempers a sick Person, at a Time when he has so much need of Repose.* And besides this, if we but consider the Occasions upon which they usually ground the Cause of our Diseases, they are so light and nice, that I thence conclude *a very little Error in the Dispensation of their Drugs may do a great deal of Mischief.* Now, if the *Mistake* of a Physician be so dangerous, we are but in a scurvy Condition; for it is almost impossible but he must often fall into those Mistakes: He had need of too many Parts, Considerations, and Circumstances, rightly to level his Design: He must know the *sick Person's Complexion, his Temperature, his Humours, Inclination, Actions, nay, his very Thoughts and Imaginations.* He must be assur'd of the *External Circumstances, of the Nature of the Place, the Quality of the Air and Season, the Situation of the Planets, and their Influences:* He must know in the *Disease the Causes, Prognosticks, Affections, and Critical Days;* in the *Drugs, the Weight, the Power of working, the Country, Figures, Age, and Dispensations,* and he must know how *rightly to proportion and mix them together, to beget a just and perfect Proportion;* wherein if there be the least Error, if amongst so many *Springs* there be but any one out of order, 'tis enough to destroy us. God knows of how great Difficulty most of these Things are to be understood. For (for Example) *how shall a Physician find out the true Sign of the Disease, every Disease being capable of an infinite Number of Indications?* How many *Doubts and Controversies* have they amongst themselves upon the *Interpretation of Urines?* Otherwise, from whence should the continual Debates we see amongst them about the *Knowledge of the Disease* proceed? How would we excuse the Error they so often fall into, of taking one thing for another? In the *Sickness* I had, were there never so little Difficulty in the Case, I never found *three of one Opinion:* Which I instance, because I love to introduce Examples wherein I am myself concern'd.

A Gen-

A Gentleman was at *Paris* lately cut for the *Stone*, by order of the Physicians; in whose *Bladder*, being accordingly so cut, there was found *no more Stone than in the Palm of his Hand*: And in the same Place, a *Bishop*, who was my particular good Friend, having been earnestly press'd by the major Part of the Physicians in Town, who he consulted, to suffer himself to be cut, to which also, upon their Words, I us'd my Interest to persuade him; when he was dead, and open'd, it appear'd that he had *no Stone but in the Reins*. They are least excusable for an Error in this Disease, by reason that it is in some sort palpable; and 'tis by that, that I conclude *Chirurgery* to be much more certain, by reason that it sees and feels what it does, and so goes less upon Conjecture; whereas the *Physicians* have no *speculum Matrices*, by which to discover our *Brains, Lungs, and Liver*. Even the very Promises of *Physick* are incredible in themselves: For, being to provide against *divers* and *contrary Accidents*, that often afflict us at one and the same time, and that have almost a necessary Relation, as the *Heat of the Liver*, and the *Coldness of the Stomach*, they will needs persuade us, that of their Ingredients *one will heat the Stomach, and the other cool the Liver*: One has its Commission to go directly to the *Reins*, nay, even to the *Bladder*, without scattering its Operations by the way, and is to retain its Power and Virtue through all the Stops and Meanders, even to the Place for the Service of which it is design'd, by its own occult Property; the other will dry the *Brain*, and another will moisten the *Lungs*. All these Things being mix'd in one *Potion*, it is a kind of Madness to imagine or hope, that these differing Virtues should separate themselves from one another in this Mixture and Confusion, to perform so many various Errands. I should very much fear that they would either lose or change their Tickets, and trouble one another's Quarters: And who can imagine but that in this liquid Confusion these Faculties must corrupt, confound, and spoil one another? And is not the Danger still more, when the making up of this Medicine is intrusted to the Skill and Fidelity of another, to whose Mercy we again abandon our Lives? As we have *Doublet* and *Breeches-makers*, distinct Trades to cloath us, and are so much the better fitted; being that each of them meddles only with his own Business, and has less to trouble

trouble his Head withal, than a *Taylor* that undertakes all ; and as in matter of *Diet*, great Persons, for their better Convenience, and to the End they may be better serv'd, have *Cooks* of distinct Offices, some for *Soups* and *Pottages*, and others for *Roasting*, which one *Cook*, that should undertake the whole Service, could not so well perform ; so must we be treated in our *Cures*. The *Egyptians* had reason to reject this General Trade of a *Physician*, and to divide the Profession to several peculiar Diseases, to every part of the Body a particular *Operator*. For that part was more properly, and with less Confusion provided for, being they especially regarded nothing else : Ours are not aware that *he who provides for all, provides for nothing*, and that the entire Government of this *Microcosm* is more than we are able to undertake. Whilst they were afraid of *stopping a Looseness*, lest they should put him into a *Fever*, they kill'd me a Friend that was worth more than the whole Pack of them put together. They counterpoise their own Divinations with the present Evils, and because they will not *cure the Brain to the Prejudice of the Stomach*, they offend both with their *mutinous and tumultuary Drugs*. As to the *Variety and Weakness of Reasons*, it is more manifest in this than in any other *Art*. *Aperitive Medicines* are proper for a Man subject to the *Stone*, by reason that opening and dilating the Passages, they help forward the slimy Matter, whereof *Gravel* and the *Stone* is engender'd, and convey that downward which begins to harden and gather in the *Reins*. *Aperitive Things* are dangerous for a Man subject to the *Stone*, by reason that opening and dilating the Passage, they help forward toward the *Reins* the Matter proper to create the *Stone*, which by their own Propension that way, being apt to seize it, 'tis not to be imagin'd but that a great deal of what has been so convey'd thither must remain behind. Moreover, if the *Medicine* happen to meet any thing too cross to be carried through all those narrow Passages it must pass to be expell'd, that *Obstruction*, whatever it is, being stir'd by these *aperitive Things*, and thrown into those narrow Passages, coming to stop them, will occasion a most certain, and most painful *Death*. They have the like Constancy in the Advices they give us for the *Regimen of Life*. It is good to make *Water* often, for we experimentally see, that in letting it lie long in the *Bladder*, we give it Time to settle the *Sedement* which will concreate into a *Stone* :

a Stone: It is not good to make Water often, for the heavy Excrements it carries along with it will not be voided without Violence, as we see by Experience, that a Torrent that runs with Force, washes the Ground it rolls over much clearer than the Course of a slow and tardy Stream. Likewise it is good to have often to do with Women, for that opens the Passages, and helps to evacuate Gravel: It is also very ill to have often to do with Women, because it heats, tires, and weakens the Reins. It is good to bathe frequently in hot Waters, forasmuch as that refreshes and mollifies the Place where the Gravel and Stone lie; and it is also ill, by reason that this Application of external Heat, helps the Reins to bake, harden, and petrify the Matter so dispos'd. For those who are at the Bath, it is most healthful to eat little at Night, to the end that the Waters they are to drink the next Morning, may have the better Operation upon an empty Stomach; on the contrary, it is better to eat little at Dinner, that it hinder not the Operation of the Waters, which is not yet perfect, and not to oppress the Stomach so soon after the other Labour, but leave the Office of Digestion to the Night, which will much better perform it than the Day, where the Body and Soul are in perpetual Motion and Action: Thus do they juggle and cant in all their Discourses at our Expence, and cannot give one Proposition against which I cannot erect a contrary of equal Force. Let them then no longer exclaim against those, who in this Trouble of Sickness suffer themselves to be gently guided by their own Appetite, and the Advice of Nature, and commit themselves to the common Fortune. I have seen in my Travels almost all the famous Baths of Christendom, and for some Years past have begun to make use of them myself, for I look upon Bathing as generally wholesome, and believe that we suffer no little Inconveniencies in our Health, by having left off the Custom that was generally observ'd in former Times almost by all Nations, and is yet in many, of bathing every Day; and I cannot imagine but that we are much the worse by having our Limbs crusted, and our Pores stopt with Dirt and Filth. And as to the drinking of them, Fortune has in the first Place render'd them not at all unacceptable to my Taste; and secondly, they are natural and simple, which at least carry no Danger with them, though they do us no Good. Of which, the infinite Crowd of People of all sorts of Complexions

plexions that repair thither, I take to be a sufficient Guaranty: And although I have not there observ'd any extraordinary and miraculous Effects; but that on the contrary, having more narrowly than ordinary enquir'd into it, I have found all the Reports of such Operations that have been spread abroad in those Places, ill grounded and false, and those that believe them (as People are willing to be gull'd in what they desire) deceiv'd in them; yet I have seldom known any that have been made worse by those Waters, and a Man cannot honestly deny but that they beget a better Appetite, help Digestion, and do in some sort revive us, if we do not go too late and in too weak a Condition, which I would dissuade every one from doing; they have not the Virtue to raise Men from desperate and inveterate Diseases, but they may help some light Indisposition, or prevent some threatening Alteration. Who does not bring along with him so much *Cheerfulness* as to enjoy the *Pleasure of the Company* he will there meet, and of the *Walks and Exercises*, to which the Amenity of those Places invite us, will doubtless lose the best and surest Part of their Effect. For this Reason I have hitherto chosen to go to those of the most pleasant Situation, where there was the most Conveniency of Lodging, Provision, and Company; as the Baths of *Bavieres* in *France*, those of *Plombieres* in the Frontiers of *Germany* and *Lorraine*, those of *Baden* in *Switzerland*, those of *Lucque* in *Tuscany*, and especially those *Della-Villa*, which I have the most, and at several Seasons frequented. Every Nation has particular Opinions, touching their *Use*, and several *Rules* and *Methods* in using them, and all of them, according to what I have seen almost of like Effect. *Drinking* of them is not at all receiv'd in *Germany*; they *bathe* for all Diseases only, and will lie dabbling in the Water almost from *Sun* to *Sun*. In *Italy*, when they *drink nine Days*, they *bathe at least thirty*, and commonly drink the Water mixt with some other *Drugs*, to make it Work the better. We are here order'd to *Walk* to digest it; they are *kept in Bed* after taking it, till it be wrought off; *their Stomachs and Feet have continually hot Cloths apply'd to them all the while*: And as the *Germans* have a particular Practice generally to use *Cupping* and *Scarification* in the *Bath*; so the *Italians* have their *Doccy*, which are certain little Channels of this
hot

hot Water brought through Pipes, and with them bathe an Hour in the Morning, and as much in the Afternoon for a Month together, either of the Head, Stomach, or any other Part where the Grief lies. There are infinite other Varieties of Customs in every Country, or rather, there is no manner of Resemblance to one another. By which you may see, that this little Art of *Physick*, to which I have only submitted, tho' the least depending upon Art of all others, has yet a great Share of the *Confusion* and *Incertainty* every where else manifest in their Profession. The *Poets* say whatever they please with greater *Emphasis* and *Grace*; witness these two *Epigrams*:

*Alcon hesternum signum Jovis attigit illa
Quamvis marmoreus, vim patitur medici:
Ecce hodie jussus transferri ex aede vetusta,
Effertur, quamvis sit Deus, atque Lapis.*

Alcon did yesterday *Jove's* Statue touch,
Which, although Marble, suffer'd by it much:
For to Day order being given it shou'd
Be taken from th' old *Temple* where it stood;
The Thing without further Delay was done,
Although he was a God, and made of Stone.

And the other,

*Lotus nobiscum est hilaris, cenavit & idem,
Inventus mane est mortuus Andragoras,
Tam subitæ mortis causam Faustine, requiris?
In somnis medicum viderat Hermocratem*.*

Andragoras bath'd, supp'd, and went well to Bed
Last Night, but in the Morning was found dead;
Would't know, *Faustinus*, what was his Disease?
He dreaming saw the *Quack*, *Hermocrates*.

Upon which I will relate two Stories: The Baron of *Caupene* in *Chalosse*, and I, have betwixt us the *Advowson* of a *Benefice* of great Extent, at the Foot of our Mountain call'd *Labontan*. It is with the Inhabitants of this *Angle*, as 'tis said of those of the Vale of *Angrougne*; they liv'd a peculiar sort of Life, their *Fashions*, *Clothes*, and *Manners* distinct from other People, rul'd and govern'd by cer-

* *Mart. Epig.*

tain particular *Laws* and *Customs* receiv'd from Father to Son, to which they submitted, without other Constraint than the Reverence to *Custom*. This little State had continued from all Antiquity in so happy a Condition, that no neighbouring *Judge* was ever put to the Trouble of enquiring into their Doings, no *Advocate* ever retain'd to give them Counsel, nor Stranger ever call'd in to compose their Differences; nor was ever any of them seen to go a Begging. They avoiding all *Alliances* and *Traffick* with the other World, that they might not corrupt the Purity of their own *Government*; till, as they say, *one of them, in the Memory of Man, having a Mind spur'd on with noble Ambition, contriv'd, to bring his Name into Credit and Reputation, to make one of his Sons something more than ordinary; and having put him to learn to Write, made him at last a brave Town-Clerk. This Fellow being grown up, began to disdain their ancient Customs, and to put into the People's Ears the Pomp of the other Parts of the Nation. The first Prank he play'd, was, to advise a Friend of his, that some Body had offended by sawing off the Horns of one of his Goats, to make his Complaint to the King's Judges thereabout, and so he went on in this Practice, till he spoil'd and confounded all. In the Tail of this Corruption, they say, there happened another, and of worse Consequence, by means of a Physician, who fell in Love with one of their Daughters, had a mind to marry her, and to live amongst them. This Man first of all began to teach them the Names of Fevers, Rheums and Impolthumes, the Seat of the Heart, Liver and Intestines; a Science till then utterly unknown to them: And instead of Garlick, with which they were wont to cure all manner of Diseases, how painful or extreme soever, he taught them, tho' it were but for a Cough, or any little Cold, to take strange Mixtures, and began to make a Trade, not only of their Healths, but of their Lives. They swear that till then they never perceiv'd the Evening Air to be offensive to the Head, that to drink when they were hot was hurtful, and that the Winds of Autumn were more unwholsome than those of the Spring; that since this Use of Physick, they find themselves oppress'd with a Legion of unaccustom'd Diseases, and that they perceive a general Decay in the wonted Vigour, and their Lives are cut shorter by the half.* This is the first of my Stories.

The other is, that before I was afflicted with the *Stone*, hearing that the *Blood* of a *He-Goat* was with many in very great Esteem, and look'd upon as a cœlestial *Manna* rain'd down upon these latter Ages for the Good and Preservation of the Lives of Men, and having heard it spoken of by Men of Understanding for an admirable *Drug*, and of infallible Operation: I, who have ever thought myself subject to all the Accidents that can befall other Men, had a mind in my perfect Health to furnish myself with this admirable Medicine, and therefore gave order to have a *Goat* fed at home, according to the *Receipt*: For he must be taken in the hottest Month of all *Summer*, and must only have aperitive Herbs given to eat, and White-Wine to drink. I came home by chance the very Day he was to be kill'd; and one came and told me, that the Cook had found two or three great Balls in his Paunch, that rattled against one another amongst what he had eaten: I was curious to have all his Entrails brought before me, where, having caus'd the Skin that inclos'd them to be cut, there tumbled out three great Lumps, as light as Spunges, so that they appear'd to be hollow; but as to the rest, hard and firm without, and spotted and mixt all over with various Colours. One was perfectly round, and of the Bignets of an ordinary Bowl; and the other two something less, of an imperfect Roundness, as seeming not to be arriv'd at their full Growth. I find by Enquiry of People accusom'd to open these Animals, that it is a rare and unusual Accident. 'Tis likely these are *Stones* of the same Nature with ours; and if so, it must needs be a very vain Hope in those who have the *Stone*, to extract their *Cure* from the *Blood* of a Beast, who was himself to die of the same Disease. For to say that the *Blood* does not participate of this Contagion, and does not alter its wonted Virtue, it is rather to be believ'd, that nothing is engendred in a Body, but by the Conspiracy and Communion of all the Parts: The whole Mass works together, tho' one Part contributes more to the Work than another, according to the Diversity of Operations. Wherefore it is very likely that there was some petrefying Quality in all the Parts of this *Goat*. It was not so much for fear of the future, and for fear of myself, that I was curious of this Experiment, but because it falls out in mine, as it does in many other
Fami-

Families, that the Women store up such little Trumperies for the Service of People, using the same *Receipt* in fifty several Diseases, and such a Receipt as they will not take themselves, and yet triumph in their good Successes. As to what remains, I honour *Physicians* not according to the common Rule, for Necessity (for to this Passage may be added another of the Prophet, reproving King *Asa* for having Recourse to a *Physician*) but for themselves, having known many very good Men of that Profession, and most worthy to be believ'd. I do not attack them; 'tis their *Art* I inveigh against, and do not much blame them for making their Advantage of our Folly, for most Men do the same. Many *Callings*, both of greater and less Dignity than theirs, have no other Foundation or Support than publick Abuse. When I am sick I send for them, if they be near; only to have their Company, and see them as others do. I give them leave to *command me to keep myself warm*, because I naturally love to do it, and to appoint *Leeks* or *Lettuce* for my Broth, to order me *White-Wine* or *Claret*, and so all other Things at their own Pleasure, which are indifferent to my Palate and Custom. I know very well that I do nothing for them in so doing, because Sharpness and ill-pleasing Tastes are Accidents of the very Essence of *Physick*. *Lycurgus* order'd Wine for the sick *Spartans*: Why? Because they abominated the drinking of it when they are well: As a Gentleman, a Neighbour of mine, takes it for a rare Medicine in his Fever, because that naturally he mortally hates the Taste. How many do we see amongst them of my Humour, that despise taking of *Physick* themselves, are Men of liberal Diet, and live a quite contrary sort of Life to what they prescribe others? What is this, but flatly to abuse our Simplicity? For their own Lives and Healths are no less dearer to them than ours are to us, and consequently they would accommodate their Effects to their own *Rules*, if they did not themselves know how false they are. 'Tis the Fear of Death and of Pain, an Impatience of the Disease, and a violent and indiscreet Desire of a present Cure that so blind us: And pure Cowardize, that makes our Belief so pliable and easy to be impos'd upon: And yet Men do not so much believe as they acquiesce

*Wine pre-
scribed for the
sick Spartans.*

and permit, for I hear them find fault and complain as well as we: But they resolve at last; *What should I do then?* As if Impatience were of itself a better Remedy than Patience. Is there any one of those who have suffer'd themselves to be persuaded into this miserable Subjection, that does not equally surrender himself to all sorts of Impostures? Who does not give up himself to the Mercy of whoever has the Impudence to promise him a Cure? The

The sick Persons of Babylon exposed in the Market-place.

Babylonians carried their Sick into the publick Place, the *Physician* was the People; where every one that pass'd by, being in Humanity and Civility oblig'd to enquire of their Condition, gave some Advice according to his own Experience. We do little better, there being not so silly a Woman whose *Charms* and *Drenches* we do not make use of, and according to my Humour, if I were to take *Phyſick*, I would sooner choose to take theirs than any other, because, at least, if they do no Good they will do no Harm. What *Homer* and *Plato* said of the *Ægyptians*, that they were all *Physicians*, may be said of all People; and there is no one that does not boast of some rare *Receipt*, and who will not venture it upon his Neighbour if he will permit him. I

+ *Meaning that were troubled with the Stone.*

was the other Day in *Company*, where some of my + *Fraternity* told us of a new sort of *Pills* made up of a hundred and odd *Ingredients*: It made us very merry, and was a singular Consolation, for what Rock could withstand so great a Battery? And yet I hear, by those who have made Trial of it, that the least Atom of *Gravel* will not stir for it. I cannot take my Hand from the Paper, before I have added a Word or two more concerning the Assurance they give us of the Infallibility of their *Drugs*, and the Experiments they have made.

The greatest Part, and I think above two Thirds, of the Medicinal Virtues, consist in the *Quintessence*, or occult Property of *Simples*, of which we can have no other Instruction than Use and Custom. For *Quintessence* is no other than a Quality, of which we cannot by our Reason find out the Cause. In such Proofs, those that pretend to have acquir'd by the Inspiration of some *Dæmon*, I am content to receive (for I meddle not with Miracles) as also
the

the Proofs which are drawn from things that upon some other Account oft fall into use amongst us; as if in *Wool*, wherewith we are wont to clothe ourselves, there have accidentally some occult deficcative Property been found out of curing *kib'd Heels*, or as if in the *Radish* we eat for Food, there have been found out some aperitive Operation. *Galen* reports that a Man happen'd to be cur'd of a Leprosy by drinking Wine out of a Vessel into which a Viper had crept by Chance. In which Example, we find the Means, and a very likely Guide and Conduct to this Experience; as we also do in those Physicians pretend to have been directed to by the Example of some Beasts. But in most of their other Experiments, wherein they declare to have been conducted by Fortune, and to have had no other Guide than Chance, I find the Progress of this Information incredible. Suppose a Man looking round about him upon the infinite number of things, *Plants, Animals* and *Metals*, I do not know where he would begin his Tryal; and though his first fancy should fix him upon an *Elk's Horn*, wherein there must be a very gentle and easy Belief, he will yet find himself perplex'd in his second Operation. There are so many Maladies, and so many Circumstances laid before him, that before he can arrive at the Certainty of the Point, to which the Perfection of his Experience should arrive, human Sense will be at the End of its Lesson: And before he can, amongst this Infinity of things, find out what this Horn is amongst so many Diseases, what the *Epilepsy*, the many Complexions in a melancholick Person, the many Seasons in Winter, the many Nations in the *French*, the many Ages in Age, the many *Cæstial Mutations* in the Conjunction of *Venus* and *Saturn*, and the many Parts in Man's Body, nay, in a Finger: And being in all this directed neither by Argument, Conjectures, Example, nor Divine Inspirations, but meerly by the sole Motion of Fortune; it should be by a perfectly artificial; regular and methodical Fortune. And after the Cure is perform'd, how can he assure himself that it was not because the Disease was arriv'd at its Period, or an Effect of Chance? or the Operation of something else that he had eaten, drank, or touch'd that Day? or by Virtue of his Grandmother's Prayers? And moreover, had this Experiment been perfect, how many times was it reiterated, and

this long Beadrole of Fortunes and Encounters strung anew from Chance to conclude a certain Rule? And when the Rule is concluded, by whom I pray you? Of so many Millions, there are but three Men who take upon them to record their Experiments. And must Chance needs just meet one of these? What if another, and a hundred others have made contrary Experiments? We might, perhaps, have some Light in this, were all the Judgments and Arguments of Men known to us. But that three Witnesses, *three Doctors*, should lord it over all Mankind is against all Reason. It were fit that Human Nature should have deputed and cull'd them out, and that they were declar'd our *Comptrollers* by exprefs Letters of *Patents*.

To Madam de DURAS.

MADAM,

THE last Time you honour'd me with a Visit, you found me at Work upon this *Chapter*, and as these Trifles may some time or other happen to fall into your Ladyship's Hands, I would have them bear witness of the great Honours which the Author will think any Favour you shall please to shew them. You will there find the same Air and Behaviour you have observ'd in his Conversation, and though I could have borrow'd some better and more favourable Dress than my own, I would not have done it, for I require nothing more of these Writings, but to present me to your Memory, such as I naturally am. The same Conditions and Faculties your *Ladyship* has been pleas'd to frequent and receive with much more Honour and Courtesy than they deserve, I will put together (but without Alteration) in one solid Body, that may perhaps, continue some Years, or some Days, after I am gone; where you may find them again when your *Ladyship* shall please to refresh your Memory, without putting you to any greater Trouble; neither are they worth it. I desire you should continue the Favour of your Friendship to me, by the same Qualities by which it was acquir'd; and am not ambitious that any one should love and esteem

esteem me more Dead than Living. The Humour of
Tiberius is ridiculous, but yet common, who was more
solicitous to extend his Renown to Posterity, than to
render himself acceptable to Men of his Own time. If
I was one of those to whom the World could owe Com-
mendation, I would acquit the one Half to have the
other in Hand, that their Praises might come quick
and crowding about me, more thick than long, more
full than durable; and let them cease, in God's Name,
with my Knowledge, and when the sweet Sound can no
longer pierce my Ears. It would be an idle Humour
to go about, now that I am going to forsake the Com-
merce of Men, to offer myself to them by a new Re-
commendation. I make no Account of the Goods I
could not employ in the Service of my Life. And
such as I am, I will be elsewhere than in Paper: My
Art and Industry have been ever directed to render me
good for something; and my Studies, to teach me to
do, and not to write. I have made it my whole Busi-
ness to frame my Life. This has been my Trade and
my Work. I am less a Writer of *Books* than any thing
else. I have coveted so much Understanding for the
Service of my present and real Conveniencies, and not
to lay up a Stock for my Posterity. He that has any
thing of Value in him, let him make it appear in his
Manners, in his ordinary Discourses, in his Courtships,
and his Quarrels, in Play, in Bed, at Table, in the Ma-
nagement of his Affairs, in his Oeconomy. Those that
I see make good *Books* in ill Breeches, should first have
mended their *Breeches*, if they would have been ruled
by me. Ask a *Spartan*, whether he had rather be a good
Orator, or a good Soldier? And if I was ask'd the same
Question, I would rather chuse to be a good *Cook*, had I
not one already to serve me. Good God! *Madam*,
how should I hate the Reputation of being a pretty Fel-
low at Writing, and an Ass and a Sot in every thing
else. Yet I had rather be a Fool in any thing, than to
have made so ill a Choice wherein to employ my Ta-
lent. And I am so far from expecting to gain any new
Reputation by these Follies, that I shall think I come off
pretty well, if I lose nothing by them of that little I
had before. For besides that this Dead Painting will
take

take from my natural Being, it has no Resemblance to
 my better Condition, but also much laps'd from my
 former Vigour and Cheerfulness, and looks faded and
 wither'd. I am towards the Bottom of the Barrel, which
 begins to taste of the *Lees*. And to the rest, *Madam*, I
 should not have dar'd to make so bold with the Mysteries
 of Physick, considering the Esteem that your *Ladyship*,
 and so many others have of it, had I not had Encourage-
 ment from their own *Authors*, *Pliny*, and *Celsus*. If
 these ever fall into your Hands, you will find that they
 speak much more rudely of their Art than I do; I but
 pinch it, they cut its Throat. *Pliny*, amongst other
 things, twits them with this, That when they are at the
 End of the Rope, that is, when they have done the utmost
 of what they are able to do, they have a pretty Device to
 save themselves, of Recommending their *Patients*, whom
 they teaz'd and tormented with their Drugs and Diets to
 no purpose, some to Vows and Miracles, and others to
 hot Bath and Waters. (Be not angry, *Madam*, he speaks
 not of those in Parts, who are under the Protection of
 your House, and all *Gramontins*.) They have besides
 another of saving their Credit, of ridding their Hands
 of us, and securing themselves from the Reproaches we
 might cast in their Teeth of the little Amendment, when
 they have had us so long in their Hands, that they have
 not one more Invention left wherewith to amuse us;
 which is, to send us to the better Air of some other Coun-
 try. This, *Madam*, is enough; I hope you will give
 me leave to return to my former Discourse, from which
 I so far digress'd, the better to divert you".

It was, I think, *Pericles*, who being ask'd how he did?
you may judge, says he, by these, shewing some little Scrolls
 of Parchment, he had ty'd about his Neck and Arms. By
 which he would infer, that he must needs be very sick
 when he was reduc'd to a Necessity of having recourse to
 such idle and vain Fopperies, and of suffering himself to
 be so much a Fool as to commit his Life and Death to the
 Mercy and Government of *Physicians*. I may fall into
 such *Frenzy*: I dare not be responsible for my future Con-
 stancy: But then, if any one ask me how I do? I may also
 answer as *Pericles* did, *You may judge by this*, shewing my
 Hand clutch'd up with six Drams of *Opium*: It will be a
 very

very evident Sign of a violent Sicknes; and my Judgment will be very much out of Order. If once Fear and Impatience get such an Advantage over me, it may very well be concluded, that there is a dreadful Fever in my Mind. I have taken the Pains to plead this *Cause*, which I little enough understand, a little to back and support the natural Aversion to Drugs and the *Practice* of *Physick*, I have deriv'd from my *Ancestors*: To the end it may not be a meer stupid and temerarious Aversion, but have a little more Form; and also, that they who shall see me so obstinate in my Resolution against all Exhortation and Menaces that shall be given me, when my Infirmary shall press hardest upon me, may not think 'tis meer Obstinacy in me; or any one so ill-natur'd, as yet to judge it to be any Motive of Glory, for it would be a strange Ambition to seek to gain Honour by an Action my *Gardener* or my *Groom* can perform as well as I. Certainly I have not a Heart so tumorous and windy, that I should exchange so solid a Pleasure as Health, for an airy and imaginary Pleasure. *Glory*, even that of the four Sons of *Aymon*, is too dear bought to a Man of Humour, if it cost him three swinging Fits of the *Stone*. Give me Health in God's Name! Such as love *Physick* may also have great and convincing Considerations; I do not hate Opinions contrary to my own. I am so far from being angry to see a Disagreement betwixt mine and other Men's Judgments, and from rendering myself unfit for the Society of Men, for being of another Sense and Party than mine; that on the contrary (the most general Way that Nature has follow'd being Variety, and more in Souls than Bodies, forasmuch as they are of a more supple Substance, and more susceptible of Forms) I find it much more rare to see our Humours and Designs jump and agree. And there never was in the World two Opinions alike, no more than two Hairs, or two Grains. The most universal Quality, is *Diversity*.

The End of the Second Book.

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