



Universitätsbibliothek Paderborn

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. I. Of Profit and Honesty.

[urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-53414](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-53414)



ESSAYS

OF

Michael Seig^r. de Montaigne.

The Third BOOK.

CHAP. I.

Of Profit and Honesty.

NO Man is free from saying silly Things; but the Misfortune is when we endeavour to play the Fool.

*Næ isle magno conatu magnus nugas dixerit *.*

The Man, in troth, with much ado
Has prov'd that one and one make two.

This no way regards me; my Words escape me with as much Indifference as they are little worth, and so much the better: I would immediately part with them for what they cost me, and neither buy nor sell them,

* *Terent. Heaut. Act. 4. Scen. 1.*

A 2

but

but according to their Weight. I write as I speak in common Conversation, and that this is true, I here give you an Example. To whom ought not Perfidy to be

Treachery reject- hateful, when even *Tiberius* himself
ed by Tiberius. refused it in an Affair of the greatest

Importance to him? Advice was sent him from *Germany*, that if he thought fit they would rid him of *Arminius* by Poison: *Arminius* was the greatest and most powerful Enemy the *Romans* had to deal with; he had destroyed their Legions under the Conduct of *Varus*, and was the only Obstacle to the Enlargement of their Dominions in that vast Country: But *Tiberius* made Answer, That the *Romans* were used to take Vengeance on their Enemies by open and honourable Means with their Swords in their Hands, and not by Fraud and Deceit. Here Utility and Policy gave place to Honesty. You will tell me that he was an impudent Deceiver himself, and spoke contrary to his Sentiments; I really believe he did so: It is no great Miracle in Men of his Profession. But the Acknowledgment due to Virtue is not the less valid for being found in the Mouth of a bad Man; in as much as Truth wrings it from him. Our outward and inward Frame is full of Imperfection; but there is nothing useless in Nature, not even Inutility itself; nothing having slipt into this *Universe*, that does not possess some proper Place in it. Our *Being* is cemented with sickly Qualities; *Ambition, Jealousy, Envy, Revenge, Superstition, and Despair*, have so natural a Possession in us, that the Image is discerned in Beasts: Even that unnatural Vice, Cruelty itself; for in the midst of Compassion, we feel within I know not what tart sweet malicious Pleasure in seeing others suffer: Children themselves feel it.

*Suave mari magno turbantibus æquore ventis,
E Terra magnum alterius spectare laborem* *.

'Tis sweet from Land to see a Storm at Sea,
And others sinking, whilst ourselves are free.

*Vices necessary in
all Governments.*

Whoever should divest Man of the Seeds of these Qualities, would destroy the fundamental Conditions of human

* *Lucan. l. i.*

Life:

Life: Even in all Governments there are necessary Offices, which are not only vile but vicious too. Vices have there a help to make up the Seam in our piercing; as Poisons are useful for the Preservation of Health. If they become excusable because they are of use to us, and that the common Necessity covers their true Qualities; we are to resign this Part to the most robust and least fearful of the People, who sacrifice their Honour and Conscience, as others of old sacrific'd their Lives for the good of their Country: We who are weaker, take upon us the Parts of Actions, that are both more easy, and less hazardous: The publick Good requires that a Man should betray, and lie, and murder; but let us leave this *Commission* to Men that are more pliable and obedient. Indeed, I have often been vexed to see Judges impudently making use of Fraud and false Hopes of Pardon and Favour, to cozen a poor Criminal into a Confession of the Fact alledged against him. It would become Justice, and *Plato* himself, who countenances this manner of proceeding, to furnish me with other means more worthy of my Approbation. This is a malicious Justice, and I look upon it as no less violated by it self than others. I said not long since in Discourse, *That I who should hardly be drawn in to betray my Prince for any particular Man, should be very much ashamed to betray any particular Man for my Prince*: And I do not only hate being a Deceiver my self; but that any one should deceive me, or others by my Means; I will neither afford Matter nor Occasion to any such thing. In the little I have had to negotiate betwixt our Princes in the Divisions and Subdivisions, by which we are at this time torn to Pieces, I have been very careful that they should neither be deceiv'd in me, nor deceive others by me: People of that sort of Trade are very reserv'd, and pretend to be the most moderate imaginable, and to chime in as much as possible with the Opinion of those with whom they have to do; but for my Part I shew myself in my true Opinion, and in a Form as much my own as I can: Like a Novice and a raw Negotiator, I had rather fail in the Affair I am about, than be wanting to my self. And yet I have hitherto had the good Luck, (for Fortune has doubtless the best Share in it) that little or nothing has passed from

Hand to Hand with less Suspicion, or with more Favour and Secrecy. I have a free and open Way that easily insinuates itself, and obtains Belief with those with whom I am to deal at the first Meeting. Sincerity and pure Truth, in what Age soever, find their Opportunity and Advantage; and besides, the Liberty and Freedom of a Man, who treats without any Interest of his own, is never hateful or suspected; and he may very well make use of the Answer of *Hippocrates* to the *Athenians*, who complained of this harsh way of speaking to them: *Gentlemen*, says he, *do not consider whether or no I am free, but whether I am so without a Bribe, or without any Advantage to my own Affairs.* My Freedom of Speech has also easily acquitted me from all Suspicion of dissimulation; my Vehemency leaving nothing unsaid, how home and bitter soever (so that I could not have said worse behind their Backs) carried along with it a manifest Shew of Simplicity and Indifference. I pretend to no other Fruit by acting than to act, and add to it no long Pursuit nor Proposals; every Action plays it's own Game, win if it can. As to the rest, I am not biased by any Passion either of Love or Hatred towards the Great, nor have my Will fettered either by particular Injury or Obligation. I look upon our *Kings* with an Affection simply loyal and respectful, neither prompted on, nor restrained by any private Interest, and I love myself for it. Neither does the general or just Cause attract me otherwise than with Moderation, and without Animosity. I am not subject to these penetrating and entirely affected Engagements. Anger and Hatred are beyond the Duty of Justice, and are Passions only useful to those who do not keep themselves strictly to their Duty by mere Reason. *Utatur motu animi, qui uti ratione non potest.* He only employs his Passion, that can make no use of his Reason. All lawful Intentions are moderate of themselves; if otherwise, they degenerate into seditious and unlawful. This is it which makes me walk every where with my Head erect, my Face and my Heart open, to confess the Truth; and I am not afraid to confess it: I should easily in case of need light up one Candle to St. *Michael*, and another to his *Dragon*, like the old Woman? I will follow the right Cause even to the Fire; but exclusively if

I

I can. Let *Montaigne* be overwhelmed in the publick Ruin if need be; but if there be no need, I should think myself obliged to *Fortune* that saves him; and I will make use of all the length of Line my Duty allows for his Preservation. Was it not *Atticus*, who being of the just, but losing Side, preserved himself by his Moderation, in that universal Shipwreck of the World, amongst so many Changes and Revolutions? In such private Men as he, it is much easier; and in such sort of Business, I find a Man may justly be ambitious not to be meddling: For a Man indeed to be wavering and irresolute, to keep his Affections unmoved, and without Inclination in the Troubles of his Country, and a publick Division, I neither think it handsom nor honest. *Ea non*

That it is neither honourable nor honest, to stand neuter in a Civil War.

media, sed nulla via est, velut eventum expectantium, quo Fortunæ consilia sua applicent *. That is not a middle Way, but no Way, to expect Events by which they refer their Resolutions to Fortune. This may be allowed in our Neighbours Affairs; and thus *Gib* the Tyrant of *Syracuse* suspended his Inclination in the Way betwixt the *Greeks* and *Barbarians*, keeping an Ambassador residing with Presents at *Delpbos*, to lye and watch to see which way Fortune would incline, and then take present Opportunity to fall in with the Victors. It would be a kind of Treason to proceed after this manner in our own domestick Affairs, wherein we must of necessity be of the one Side or the other; though I hold it more excusable for a Man to sit still, when he has no Office or Command to call him out to Action, except in foreign Expeditions, to which, according to our Laws, no Man is pressed against his Will: And yet I don't excuse myself upon these Terms. Even those who wholly engage themselves in such a War, may behave themselves with so much Moderation and Temper, that 'tis likely the Storm may fly over their Heads without doing them any harm. Had we not Reason to expect such an Issue in the Person of the *Sieur de Morvilliers*, late Bishop of *Orleans*? And I know several, who though they behave themselves with the

* *Liv. l. 32.*

greatest Courage and Vigour in the present War, whose Manners are so gentle, obliging, and just, that they will certainly stand firm, whatever Event Heaven is preparing for us. I am of Opinion, that it properly belongs to *Kings* only to quarrel with *Kings*, and laugh at those *Bully-Rocks*, that out of Wantonness of Courage present themselves to so disproportioned Disputes: for a Man has never the more particular Quarrel to a *Prince*, for marching openly and boldly against him for his own Honour, and according to his Duty: If he does not love such a Person, he does better, he has a Reverence and Esteem for him. And the Cause of defending the *Laws*, and the ancient Government of a Kingdom, has this always especially annexed to it, that even those, who for their own private Interest invade them, excuse, if they do not honour the *Defenders*. But we ought not, as the Fashion is at present, to honour with the Name of Duty that Peevishness and inward Discontent which spring from private Interest and Passion; nor call a treacherous and malicious Conduct, Courage. People give the Name of *Zeal* to their Propensity to Mischief and Violence; though it is not the *Cause* but their Interest that inflames them. They kindle and begin a *War*, not because it is just, but because it is War. Nothing hinders a Man from behaving himself discreetly, without any Breach of his Loyalty, amongst the adverse Party; carry yourself then, if not with the same equal Affection, (for that is capable of different Measures) at least with an Affection moderate, well tempered, and such as shall not so engage you to one Party, that it may expect all you are able to do for that Side, and content yourself also with a moderate Proportion of their Favour and Good-will, and to swim in troubled Waters, without fishing in them. The other Way of offering a Man's self, and the utmost Service he is able to do, both to one Party and the other, has yet in it less of Prudence than Conscience. Does not he to whom you betray another, to whom you was as welcome as to himself, know that you will at another time do as much for him? He holds you for a Villain; and in the mean time hears what you will say, gathers Intelligence from you, and works his own Ends out of your Disloyalty;
for

for Double-dealing Men are useful in bringing in, but we must have a care they carry out as little as is possible. I say nothing to one Party, which I may not upon Occasion say to the other, with a little Alteration of Accent, and report nothing but Things either indifferent or known, or what is of common Consequence. I cannot suffer myself for any Consideration to tell them a *Lie*. What is intrusted to my Secrecy, I religiously conceal; but I take as few Trusts of that Nature upon me as I can. The Secrets of *Princes* are a troublesome Burden to such as are not interested in them. I very willingly capitulate that they trust me with little, but confidently rely upon what I tell them: I have ever known more than I desired. One open Way of speaking opens another open Way of speaking, and draws out Discoveries like *Wine* and *Love*. *Philippides*, in my Opinion, answered King *Lysimachus* very discreetly, who asking him what Part of his Estate he should bestow upon him? *What you will*, said he, *provided it be none of your Secrets*. I see every one mutters, and is displeased, if the Bottom of the Affair be conceal'd from him wherein he is employ'd, or that there be any Reservation in the Case; for my part, I am content to know no more of the Business than what they desire I should employ myself in, nor desire that my Knowledge should exceed or strain my Word: if I must serve for an Instrument of Deceit, let it be at least with a safe Conscience; I will neither be reputed a Servant so affectionate, nor so loyal, as to be fit to betray any one. Who is unfaithful to himself, is excusably so to his Master. But there are *Princes* who do not accept Men by halves, and despise limited and conditional Services. I cannot help it, I truly tell them how far I can go; for a *Slave* I should not be, but upon very good Reason; and however, I could hardly submit to that Condition. And they also are to blame to exact from a Freeman the same Subjection and Obligation to their Service, that they do from one whom they have made, and bought, or whose Fortune does particularly and expressly depend upon theirs. The *Laws* have delivered me from a great Anxiety, they have chosen

*Wherein double
Dealing Men
are of Use.*

sen

sen a Master for me; all other Superiority and Obligation ought to be relative to him, and cut off from every thing else. Yet is not this to say, that if my Affection should otherwise sway and incline me, my Hand should presently obey it; the Will and Desire are a *Law* to themselves; but Actions must receive Commission from the publick Appointment. All this Proceeding of mine is a little dissonant from the ordinary Forms; it would produce no great Effects, nor be of any long Duration; Innocence itself could not, in this Age of ours, either negotiate without Dissimulation, or traffick without lying. And indeed publick Employments are by no means for my Palate; what my Profession requires, I perform after the most private manner that I can. Being young, I was engaged up to the Ears in Business, and it succeeded well; but I disengaged myself in due time. I have often since avoided meddling in it, seldom accepted, and never asked it, keeping my Back still turned to Ambition: but if not like Rowers, who so advance backward, yet so nevertheless, that I am less obliged to my Resolution than to my good Fortune, that I was not wholly embarked in it. For there are Ways less displeasing to my Taste, and more suitable to my Ability, by which if she had formerly called me to the publick Service, and my own Advancement towards the World's Opinion, I know I should, in spite of all my own Arguments to the contrary, have pursued them. Such as commonly say, in Opposition to what I profess, that what I call Freedom, Simplicity, and Plainness in my Manners, is Art and Subtlety, and rather Prudence than Goodness, Industry than Nature, good Sense than good Luck, do me more Honour than Disgrace; but doubtless they make my Subtlety too subtle; and whoever has followed me close, and pried narrowly into me, I will give him the Victory, if he does not confess that there is no *Rule* in their School that could match this natural Motion, and maintain an Appearance of Liberty and Licence so equal and inflexible, through so many various and crooked Paths, and through which all their Wit and Endeavours could never have led them. The Way of Truth is one, and simple; that of particular Profit, and the Commodity

of

of Affairs with which a Man is intrusted, is double, unequal, and casual. I have seen these counterfeit and artificial Liberties practised, but for the most part without Success. They relish of *Æsop's* Ass, who in Emulation of the Dog, obligingly clapt his two fore Feet upon his Master's Shoulders; but as many Caresses as the Dog had for such an Expression of Kindness, twice so many Blows with a Cudgel had the poor Ass for his Compliment. *Id maxime quemque decet, quod est cujusque suum maxime* *. That best becomes every Man, that he is best at. I will not deprive Deceit of it's Due; that would be to understand the World but very ill. I know it has often been of great Use, and that it maintains and supplies the greatest Part of Mens Affairs. There are Vices that are lawful, as there are many Actions either good, or at least excusable, that are not lawful in themselves. That Justice which in itself is natural and universal, is otherwise, and more nobly ordered than that other Justice, which is peculiar, national, and wrested to the ends of Government. *Veri Juris germanæque Justitiæ solidam, & expressam effigiem nullam tenemus; umbra & imaginibus utimur* †. We retain no solid and express Effigies of true Right and Justice; we have only the Shadow and Notion of it. Insomuch that the wise *Dandamis* hearing the Lives of *Socrates*, *Pythagoras* and *Diogenes* read, judged them to be great Men every Way, excepting that they were too much subjected to the Reverence of the *Laws*, which, to second and authorize true Virtue, must abate very much of it's original Vigor, and many vicious Actions are introduced, not only by their Permission, but Advice. *Ex senatusconsultis plebisque citis scelera exercentur* **. Vicious Actions are committed by the Consent of the Magistrates and the common Laws. I follow the common Phrase, that distinguishes betwixt profitable and honest things, so as to call some natural Actions, that are not only profitable and necessary, dishonest and foul. But let us proceed in our Examples of Treachery; two Pretenders to the

* *Cicero de Off. l. 1.*† *Ibid. l. 5.*** *Seneca, Epist. 97.*

King.

Kingdom of *Thrace* were fallen into Dispute about their Title. The *Emperor* hindered them from proceeding to Blows; but one of them, under colour of bringing things to a friendly Issue by an Interview, having invited his *Competitor* to an Entertainment in his own House, took, and kill'd him. Justice requir'd that the *Romans* should have Satisfaction for this Offence; but there was a Difficulty in obtaining it by ordinary Ways. What therefore they could not do by due Forms of *Law*, without a War, and without Danger, they attempted to do by Treachery; and what they could not honestly do, they did profitably. For which End one *Pomponius Flaccus* was found to be a fit Instrument. This Man, by dissembled Words and Assurance, having drawn the other into his *Snare*, instead of the Honour and Favour he had promised him, sent him bound Hand and Foot to *Rome*. Here one Traitor betray'd another, contrary to common Custom; for they are full of Mistrust, and 'tis hard to over-reach them in their own Art: witness the sad Experience we have lately had. Let who will be *Pomponius Flaccus*, and there are enough that would be. For my Part, both my Word and my Faith are like all the rest, Parts of this common Body; their best Effect is the publick Service, which I take for presuppos'd. But should one command me to take charge of the Palace, and the Records there, I should make answer, That I understood it not; or the Command of a Conductor of *Pioneers*, I would say, That I was called to a more honourable Employment. So likewise he that would employ me to lie, betray, and forswear myself, though not to assassinate, or to poison, for some notable Service, I should say, If I have rob'd or stolen any thing from any Man, send me rather to the *Gallies*. For it is lawful for a Man of Honour to say as the *Lacedæmonians* did, having been defeated by *Antipater*, when just upon the Point of concluding an Agreement, *You may impose as heavy and ruinous Taxes upon us as you please; but to command us to do shameful and dishonest things, you will lose your time, for it is to no purpose.* Every one ought to take the same Oath to himself, that the *Kings of Egypt* made their Judges solemnly swear, That they would not do any thing contrary

trary to their Consciences, though ever so much commanded to it by the Kings themselves. In such *Commissions* there is an evident Mark and Ignominy and Condemnation. And he who gives it, does at the same time accuse you, and gives it, if you understand it right, for a Burden and a Punishment. As much as the publick Affairs are bettered by your Exploit, so much are your own the worse; and the better you behaved yourself in it, 'tis so much the worse for yourself. And it will be no new thing, nor perhaps without some Colour of Justice, if the same Person ruin you who set you on work. If Treachery can be in any Case excusable, it must be only so when it is practised to chastise and betray Treachery. There are Examples enough of Treacheries not only rejected, but chastised, and punished by those in Favour of whom they were undertaken. Who is ignorant of *Fabricius's* Sentence against *Pyrrhus* his *Physician*? But this we also find recorded, that some Persons have commanded a thing, who afterwards have severely revenged the Execution of it upon him they had employed, rejecting the Reputation of so unbridled an Authority, and disowning so lewd, and so base a Servitude and Obedience. *Jaropelus*, Duke of *Russia*, tamper'd with a Gentleman of *Hungary* to betray *Boleslaus*, King of *Poland*, either by killing him, or by giving the *Russians* Opportunity to do him some notable Mischiefe. This Gallant goes presently in hand with it, was more assiduous in the Service of that King than before; so that he obtained the Honour to be of his Council, and one of the chiefest in his Trust; with these Advantages, and taking a proper Opportunity of his Master's Absence, he betrayed *Villicia*, a great and rich City to the *Russians*, which was entirely sacked and burnt, and not only all the Inhabitants of both Sexes, young and old, put to the Sword; but moreover a great Number of neighbouring Gentry, that he had drawn thither to that wicked End. *Jaropelus's* Revenge being thus satisfied, and his Anger appeased, which was not however without Pretence (for *Boleslaus* had highly offended him, and after the same manner) and sated with the Effect of this Treachery, coming to consider the Foulness

Wherein Treachery is only to be excused.

Foulness of it, with a sound Judgment, and clear from Passion, looked upon what had been done with so much Horror and Remorse, that he caused the Eyes to be bored out, and the Tongue, and privy Parts to be cut off, of him that had performed it. *Antigonus* persuaded the Soldiers called *Argyraspides* to betray *Eumeneus* their General, his Adversary, into his Hands. But after he had caused him so delivered to be slain, he would himself be the *Commissioner* of the Divine Justice, for the Punishment of so detestable a Crime, and committed them into the Hands of the Governor of the *Province*, with express Command by all means to destroy, and bring them all to an evil End. So that of all that great Number of Men, not so much as one ever returned again into *Macedonia*. The more effectually he had been served, the greater Wickedness he looked upon it to be, and the more deserving a severe Punishment. The Slave that betrayed the Place where his Master *P. Sul-*

*A Slave thrown
from the Tar-
peian Rock for
Treason.*

*Engagement, he was thrown Headlong from the Tar-
peian Rock.*

*Three Servants
hanged for be-
traying Canacre
their Master.*

pilius lay concealed, was according to the Promise of *Sylla's* Proscription, manumitted for his Pains: But according to the Promise of the publick Justice, which was free from any such Engagement, he was thrown Headlong from the *Tarpeian Rock*. And our King *Clouis*, instead of the Armour of Gold he had promised them, caused three of *Canacre's* Servants to be hang'd after they had betrayed their Master to him, though he had debauched them to it. They hang'd them with the Purse of their Reward about their Necks. After having satisfied their second, and special Faith, they satisfy the general, and first. *Mahomet* the second being resolved to rid himself of his Brother, out of Jealousy of State, according to the Practice of the *Ottoman* Family, he employed one of his Officers in the Execution, who pouring a Quantity of Water too fast into him, choked him. This being done, to expiate the Murther, he delivered the Murtherer into the Hands of the Mother of him he had so caused to be put to Death, (for they were but half Brothers by the Father's Side) who in his Presence ript up the Murtherer's Bosom, and

and with her own revenging Hands rifled his Breast for his Heart, tore it out, and threw it to the Dogs. And even to the vilest Dispositions, it is the sweetest thing imaginable, having once got their Ends in a vicious Action immediately to tag to it, with all imaginable Security, some shew of Virtue and Justice, by way of Compensation and conscientious Remorse. To this may be added, that they look upon the Ministers of such horrid Crimes, as People that reproach them with them; and think by their Deaths to raze out the Memory and Testimony of such Proceedings. Or if perhaps you are rewarded, not to frustrate the publick Necessity of that extreme and desperate Remedy; he that does it, cannot for all that, if he be not such himself, but look upon you as a cursed and execrable Fellow; and conclude you a greater Traitor, than he does him against whom you are so; for he tries the Lewdness of your Disposition by your own Hands; where he cannot possibly be deceived, you having no Object of preceding Hatred to move you to such an Act. But he employs you as condemn'd Malefactors are employed in Executions of Justice, an Office as necessary as dishonest. Besides the Baseness of such Commissions, there is moreover a Prostitution of Conscience. As the Daughter of *Sejanus* *Virgins could not* could not be put to Death by the Law *be put to Death* of Rome, because she was a Virgin, *at Rome.* she was, to make it lawful, first ravish'd by the Hangman, and then strangled; not only his Hand, but his Soul is Slave to the publick Convenience. When *Amurath* the First, the more grievously to punish his Subjects, who had taken Part with the Parricide Rebellion of his Son, ordain'd, that the nearest Kindred should assist in the Execution; I find it very handsom in some of them, to have rather chosen to be unjustly thought guilty of the Parricide of another, than to serve Justice by a Parricide of their own. And whereas I have seen at the taking of some little Fort by Assault in my Time, some Rascals, who to save their own Lives, would consent to hang their Friends and Companions; I look upon them to be in a worse Condition than those that were hang'd. 'Tis said, that *Witoldus*, Prince of *Lithuania*, introduced a Law into his Country,

Country,

Criminals condemn'd to execute themselves.

Country, that when a Criminal was condemn'd to Death, he should execute the Sentence himself; for he thought it strange that a third Person, innocent of the Fault, should be made guilty of the Homicide. A Prince, when by some urgent Circumstance, or some impetuous and unforeseen Accident, that very much concerns his Estate, compell'd to forfeit his Word, or break his Faith, or otherwise forced from his ordinary Duty, ought to attribute this Necessity to a Lash of the Divine Rod: Vice it is not, for he has given up his own Reason to a more universal and more powerful Reason; but certainly 'tis a Misfortune: So that if any one should ask me, what Remedy? None, says I, *if he were really rack'd betwixt these two Extremes, (sed videat ne quærat latebra perjurio*)* he must do it; but if he did it without Regret, if it did not grieve him to do it, 'tis a sign his Conscience is in a scurvy Condition. If there be a Person to be found of so tender a Conscience as to think no Cure whatever worth so important a Remedy, I shall like him never the worse. He could not more excusably, or more decently perish. We cannot do all we would. So that we must often, as the last anchorage, commit the Protection of our Vessels to the Conduct of Heaven. To what more just Necessity does he reserve himself? What is more impossible for him to do, than what he cannot do but at the Expence of his Faith and Honour? Things that perhaps ought to be dearer to him than his own Safety, or the Safety of his People. Though he should with folded Arms only call God to his Assistance, has he not reason to hope that the Divine Bounty will not refuse the Favour of an extraordinary Arm to just and pure Hands? These are dangerous Examples, rare and sickly Exceptions to our natural Rules: We must yield to them, but with great Moderation and Circumspection. No private Advantage is of such Importance, that we should upon that account strain our Consciences to such a Degree; the Publick may, when very manifest, and of very great Concern. *Timoleon* made a timely Expiation for his strange Fact by

* *Cicero de Offic. l. 3.*

the Tears he shed, calling to Mind that it was with a fraternal Hand that he had slain the *Tyrant*. And it justly prick'd his Conscience, that he had been necessitated to purchase the publick Utility at so great a Price as the Violation of his own Welfare. Even the *Senate* itself, by his Means delivered from Slavery, durst not positively determine of so high a Fact, and divided into two so important and contrary Aspects. But the *Syracusans*, having opportunely, at the same time, sent to the *Corinthians* to solicit their Protection, and to require of them a Captain fit to re-establish their City in it's former Dignity, and to cleanse *Sicily* of several little *Tyrants*, by which it was oppressed; they deputed *Timoleon* for that Service, with this cunning Declaration: That according as he should behave himself, well or ill in his Employment, their Sentence should incline either to favour the Deliverer of his Country, or to disavour the Murtherer of his Brother. This fantastick Conclusion carries along with it some Excuse, by reason of the Danger of the Example, and the Importance of so double-faced an Action: And they did well to discharge their own Judgment of it, and refer it to others, who were not so much concern'd. But *Timoleon's* Conduct and Behaviour in this Expedition soon made his Cause more clear; so worthily and virtuously did he carry himself upon all Occasions. And the good Fortune, that accompanied him in the Difficulties he had to overcome in this noble Employment, seemed to be strewed in his Way by the *Gods*, as favourably conspiring for his Justification. This Man's View is excusable, if any can be so. But the Profit of the Augmentation of the publick Revenue, that serv'd the *Roman Senate* for a Pretence to the foul Conclusion I am going to relate, is not sufficient to warrant any such Injustice.

Certain *Cities* had for Money redeem'd themselves and their Liberties out of the Hands of *L. Sylla*, and that too by Order and Consent of the *Senate*; but the Affair coming again in Question, the *Senate* condemn'd them to be taxable as they were before, and that the Money they had disburs'd for their Redemption should be confiscated. *Civil Wars* often produce such vile Examples; that we punish private Men for confiding in

us when we were publick Ministers; and the self same *Magistrate* makes another Man pay the Penalty of his Change that cannot help it. The *Prædagogue* whips his Scholar for his Docility; and the Guide beats the blind Man that he leads; a horrid Image of Justice. There are Rules in *Philosophy* that are both false and weak. The

Private Utility
not to be pre-
ferr'd before
Faith given.

Example that is propos'd to us, preferring private Utility before Faith given, has not weight enough by the Circumstance they put to it. *Robbers* have seized you, and after having made you swear to pay them a certain Sum of Money, dismiss you. 'Tis not well done to say, that an honest Man may be quit from his Oath without payment, being out of their Hands. 'Tis no such matter: What Fear has once made me willing to do, I am oblig'd to do it when I am no more in fear. And though that Fear only prevail'd with my Tongue, without forcing my Will, yet am I bound to keep my Word. For my part, when my Tongue has inconsiderately said something that I did not think, I have made a Conscience of disowning it. Otherwise by degrees we shall abolish all the Right another pretends to from our promise. *Quasi verò forti viro vis possit adhiberi* *. As though a Man truly valiant could be compell'd. And 'tis only lawful upon the Account of private Interest to excuse Breach of Promise, when we have promised something that is unlawful and wicked in itself: For the Right of Virtue ought to take Place of the Right of any Obligation of ours. I have formerly placed *Epaminondas* in the first Rank of excellent Men, and do not repent it. How far did he stretch the Consideration of his own particular Duty? who never kill'd Man that he had overcome; who for his inestimable Benefit of restoring the Liberty of his Country, made Conscience of killing a *Tyrant*, or his Accomplice, without due Form of Justice; and who concluded him to be a wicked Man, how good a Citizen soever otherwise, who amongst his Enemies spar'd not his Friend and Acquaintance in *Battle*? This was a Soul of a rich Composure: He married Bounty and Humanity; nay, even

* *Cicero de Offic. l. 3.*

the tenderest and most delicate in the whole School of *Philosophy*, to the rudest and most violent of all human Actions. That great Courage, so constant and unshaken in Dangers, so obstinate against Poverty, Pain, and Death; was in *Nature* or *Art* that had soften'd it to so extreme a Degree of Sweetness and Compassion? Dreadful in War, with Fire and Blood, he over-ran and subdued a Nation invincible to all others but to him alone; and yet in the Fury of an Engagement could turn aside from encountering his Host and Friend. Certainly he was most fit to command in War, who could so rein himself with the Curb of a good Nature, in the Height and Heat of his Fury, and a Fury so inflam'd and foaming with Blood and Slaughter. 'Tis almost a Miracle to be able to mix any Image of Justice with such violent Actions: And it was only possible for such a Stedfastness of Mind as that of *Epaminondas*, to mix with it the Sweetness and Easiness of the gentlest Manner and purest Innocency. And whereas one told the *Mammertines*, that *Statues* were of no Resistance against armed Men; and another told the *Tribune* of the People, that the time of Justice and War were distinct Things; and a third said, that the Noise of Arms deafen'd the Voice of the Law: This Man in all this Rattle was not deaf to that of Civility, and mere Courtesy. Had he not borrowed from his Enemies the Custom of sacrificing to the *Muses* when he went to War, that they might by their Sweetness and Gaiety soften his martial and unrelenting Fury? Let us not fear by the Example of so great a Master, to believe that there is something unlawful, even against an Enemy; and that the common Concern ought not to require all Things of all, against private Interest. *Manente memoria etiam in dissidio publicorum fœderum privati juris:*

—*Et nulla potentia vires
Præstandi, ne quid peccet amicus habet* *.

And no Pow'r upon Earth can e'er dispense,
Treachery to a Friend without Offence.

* *Ovid.*

B 2

And

And that all Things are not lawful to an honest Man, for the Service of his *Prince*, the *Laws*, or the *general Quarrel*. *Non enim Patria præstat omnibus officiis, & ipsi conducit pios habere Cives in Parentes* *. 'Tis an Instruction proper for the Time wherein we live; we need not harden our Courages with these Arms of Steel, 'tis enough that our Soldiers are inur'd to them. 'Tis enough to dip our Pens in Ink, without dipping them in Blood. If it be Grandeur of Courage, and the Effect of a singular and uncommon Virtue, to contemn Friendship, private Obligations, a Man's Word, and Relation, for the common Good, and Obedience to the Magistrate; 'tis certainly sufficient to excuse us, that 'tis a Grandeur that could have no Place in the Grandeur of *Epaminondas's* Courage. I abominate those mad Exhortations of this other enraged and discompos'd Soul:

— *Dum tela micant, non vos pietatis imago
Ulla, nec adversâ conspecti fronte parentes
Commoveant, vultus gladio turbate verendos* †.

When Swords are drawn, let no Remains of Love,
Friendship or Piety Compassion move;
But boldly wound the venerable Face
Of your own Fathers if oppos'd in Place.

Let us deprive wicked, bloody, and treacherous Natures of such a Pretence of Reason. Let us set aside this guilty and enormous Justice, and stick to no more human Imitations. How great Things can *Time* and *Example* do? In an Encounter of the *Civil War* against *Cinna*, one of *Pompey's* Soldiers having unawares kill'd his Brother, who was of the contrary *Party*, he immediately through Shame and Sorrow kill'd himself; and some Years after, in another Civil War, among the same *People*, one demanded a Reward from his Captain, for having kill'd his Brother. A Man brings but a very bad Proof of the Honour and Beauty of an Action, by pleading the Usefulness of it; and such as say, that every one is obliged,

* *Cicero de Off.* l. 6.

† *Lucan.* l. 7.

and

and that it is honest if it is useful, draw but a very false Conclusion.

Omnia non pariter rerum omnibus apta.*

All Things are not alike for all Men fit.

Let us chuse what is more necessary and profitable for human Society, it will be Marriage; and yet the Counsel of the Saints find the contrary much better, excluding the most honourable Vocation of Men; as we design those Horses for *Stallions*, of which we make the least Account.

* *Propert.*



CHAP. II.

Of Repentance.

Others form *Man*, I only report him, and represent a particular one, ill made enough; and whom, if I had him to model anew, I should certainly make something else of him than what he is: But that's past recalling. Now, though the Features of my Picture alter and change, 'tis not however unlike. The World eternally turns round, all Things therein are incessantly moving; the Earth, the Rocks of *Caucasus*, and the *Pyramids of Egypt*, both by the publick Motion, and their own. Even *Constancy* itself is no other but a slower and more languishing Motion. I cannot fix my Object, 'tis always tottering and reeling by a natural Drunkenness. I take it as it is at the Instant I consider it. I do not paint it's Being, I paint it's Passage, not a

B₃

Passage