

MICHEL DE MONTAIGNE

ESSAYS



Book 3 · Chapter 5

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Upon some verses of Virgill

PROFITABLE THOUGHTS, the more full and solide they are, the more combersome and heavy are they; vice, death, povertie and diseases, are subjects that waigh and grieve. We must have our minde instructed with meanes to sustaine and combate mischiefes, and furnished with rules how to live well and believe right: and often rouze and exercise it in this goodly studie. But to a minde of the common stampe; it must be with intermission and moderation; it groweth weake, by beeing continually over-wrested: When I was young, I had need to be advertised and solicited to keepe my selfe in office: Mirth and health (saies one) sute not so well with these serious and grave discourses. I am now in another state. The conditions of age doe but over-much admonish, instruct and preach unto me. From the excesse of jollitie, I am falne into the extreame of severitie; more peevish and more untowarde. Therefore, I doe now of purpose somewhat give way unto licentious allurements; and now and then employ my minde in wanton and youthfull conceits, wherein she recreates hir selfe. I am now but too much settled; too heavie and too ripe. My yeares reade me daily a lesson of coldnesse and temperance. My body shunneth disorder, and feares it: it hath his turne to direct the minde toward reformation; his turne also to rule and swaye; and that more rudely and imperiouslie. Be I awake or a sleepe, it doth not permit me one houre but to thinke on instruction, on death, on patience and on repentance. As I have heretofore defended my selfe from pleasure, so I now warde my selfe from temperance: it haleth me too farre backe, and even to stupiditie. I will now every way be maister of my selfe. *Wisedome hath her excesses, and no lesse neede of moderation, then folly.* So that least I should wither, tarnish and over-cloy my selfe with prudence, in the intermissions my evils affoord me;

Mens intenta suis ne siet usque malis.

*Still let not the conceit attend,
The ills that it too much offend.*

I gentlie turne aside, and steale mine eyes from viewing that tempestuous and cloudie skie, I have before me; which (thankes be to

God) I consider without feare, but not without contention and studie.
And amuse my selfe with the remembrance of passed youth-tricks:

*animus quod perdidit, optat,
Atque in præterita se totus imagine uersat.*

*The minde, what it hath lost, doth wish and cast,
And turne and winde in Images forepast.*

That infancie looketh forward, and age backward; was it not that which *Janus* his double visage signifie? yeares entraine me if they please; but backward. As far as mine eyes can discern that faire expired season, by fits I turne them thitherward. If it escape my bloud and veines, yet will I not roote the image of it out of my memorie:

*hoc est,
Uiuere bis, uita posse priore frui,*

*This is the way for any to live twice,
Who can of former life enjoy the price.*

Plato appoints old men to be present at youthfull exercises, dances and games, to make them rejoyce-at the bodies agilitie, and comliness of others, which is now no longer in them; and call to their remembrance, the grace and favour of that blooming age: and willet them to give the honor of the victory to that young-mã, who hath gladdened and made most of them mery. I was heretofore wont to note sullen and gloomy dayes, as extraordinarie: now are they my ordinary ones; the extraordinary are my faire and cleere dayes. I am ready to leape for joy, as at the receaving of some unexpected favour, when nothing grieveth me. Let me tickle my selfe, I can now hardly wrest a bare smile from this wretched body of mine. I am not pleased but in conceit and dreaming: by sleight to turne aside the way-ward cares of age: but sure there's need of other remedies, then dreaming. A weake contention of arte against nature. It is meere simplicitie, as most men doe, to prolong and anticipate humane incommunities. *I had rather be lesse while old, then old before my time.* I take hold even of the least occasions of delight I can meet withall. I know by how heere-say divers kindes of wise, powrefull and glorious pleasures: but opinion is not of sufficient force over me, to make me long for them. I would not have them so stately, lofty and disdainfull; as pleasant, gentle and ready. *A natura discedimus; populo nos damus, nullius rei bono auctori; We forsake nature, We followe the people, aucthor of no good.* My Philosophie is in action, in naturall and present use; little in conceit. What if I should be pleased to play at cob-nut, or whip a top?

Non ponebat enim rumores ante salutem.

*He did not prize what might be said,
Before how all might safe be laid.*

Voluptuousnesse is a qualitie little ambitious; it holds it selfe rich enough of it selfe without any accesse of reputation; and is best affected where it is most obscured. That young man should deserve the whip. who would spend his time in choosing out the neatest Wine, and best sauces.

There is nothing I ever knew or esteemed lesse: I now begin to learne it. I am much ashamed of it, but what can I doe withall? And am more ashamed and vexed, at the occasions that compell me to it. It is for us to dally, doate and trifle out the time; and for youth to stand upon nice reputation, and hold by the better end of the staffe. That creepeth towards the world, and marcheth toward credite; we come from it. *Sibi arma, sibi equos, sibi hastas, sibi clauam, sibi pilam, sibi natationes et cursus habeant: nobis senibus, ex lusionibus multis, talos relinquunt, et tesseras;* Let them keepe their armor, their horses, their lances, their polaxes, their tennis, their swimming, and their running; and of their many games, let them put over to us old men the tables and the cardes. The very lawes send us home to our lodgings. I can doe no lesse in favour of this wretched condition, whereto my age forceth me, then furnish it with some-what to dandle and amuse it selfe, as it were childehood: for when all is done we fall into it againe. And both wisdom and folly shall have much a doe, by enterchange offices, to support and succour me in this calamitie of age.

Misce stultitiam consiliis breuem.

*With short-light-foolish tricks,
Thy greatest counsels mixe.*

Withall I shun the lightest pricklings; and those which heretofore could not have scratcht me, doe now transpearce me. So willingly my habite doth now begin to apply it selfe to evill: *in fragili corpore odiosa omnis offensio est:* all offence is yrkesome to a crazed body.

Ménsque pati durum sustinet ægra nihil.

*A sicke minde can endure,
No hard thing for hir cure.*

I have ever beene ticklish and nice in matters of offence, at this present I am more tender, and every where open.

Et minimæ uires frangere quassa ualent.

*Least strength can breake,
Things worne and weake.*

Well may my judgement hinder mee from spurning and repining at the inconveniences which nature allots me to indure; from feeling them it cannot. I could finde in my hart to runne from one end of the world to another, to searche and purchase one yeare of pleasing and absolute tranquillity; I, who have no other scope, then to live and be mery. Drouzie and stupide tranquillitie is sufficiently to bee found for me, but it makes me drouzie and dizzie; therefore I am not pleased with it. If there be any body, or any good companie in the countrie, in the cittie, in *France*, or any where els, resident traveling, that likes of my conceits, or whose humores are pleasing to mee, they neede but holde up their hand, or whistle in their fiste, and I will store them with Essayes, of pithe and substance, with might and maine. Seeing it is the mindes priviledge to renew and recover it selfe on olde age, I earnestly advise it to doe it: let it bud, blossome, and flourish if it can, as Misle-toe on a dead tree. I feare it is a traitor; so

straightly is she clasped, and so hard doth she cling to my body, that every hand-while she forsakes me; to follow hir in hir necessities. I flatter hir in private, I urge hir to no purpose; in vaine I offer to divert hir from this combination, and bootlesse it is for me to present hir *Seneca* or *Catullus*, or Ladies, or stately dances; if hir companion have the chollicke, it seemes she also hath it. The very powers or faculties that are particulare and proper to hir, cannot then rouze themselves: they evidently seeme to be en-rheumed: there is no blithenesse in hir productions, if there be none in the body. Our schollers are to blame, who searching the causes of our mindes extraordinarie fits and motions, besides they ascribe some to a devine fury, to love, to warre-like fiercenesse, to Poesie, and to Wine; if they have not also allotted health her share. A health youthfull, lustie, vigorous, full, idle, such as heretofore the Aprill of my yeares and securitie afforded me by fittes. That fire of jocondnesse stirreth up livelie and bright sparckles in our minde, beyond our naturall brightnesse: and amongst the most working, if not the most desperate *Enthousiasmes* or inspirations. Well, it is no wonder if a contrary estate clogge and naile my spirite, and drawe from it a contrarie effect.

Ad nullum consurgit opus, cum corpore languet.

*It to no worke doth rise,
When body fainting lyes.*

And yet would have me beholden to him, for lending (as he sayth) much lesse to this consent, then beareth the ordinary custome of men. Let us at least whilst we have truce, chase all evils, and expell all difficulties from our societie.

Dum licet obducta soluatur fronte senectus:

*With wrinkled wimpled forehead let old yeares,
While we may, be resolv'd to merie cheeres.*

Tetrica sunt amœnanda iocularibus, Unpleasant things, and sowre matters should be sweetned and made pleasant with sportefull mixtures. I love a lightsome and civill discretion, and loathe a roughnesse and austeritie of behaviour: suspecting every peevish and wayward countenance.

Tristémque uultus tetrici arrogantiam.

*Of austere countenance,
The sad soure arrogance.*

Et habet tristis quoque turba cynædos,

*Fidlers are often had,
Mongst people that are sad.*

I easily beleieve *Plato*, who saieth, that *easie* or *hard* humours, are a great prejudice unto the mindes goodnesse or badnesse. *Socrates* had a constant countenance, but light-some and smyling: not frowardly constant, as olde *Crassus*, who was never seene to laugh. *Vertue* is a pleasant and buxom

qualitie. Few, I know will snarle at the liberty of my writings, that have not more cause to snarle at their thoughts-loosenes. I cōforme my selfe unto their courage, but I offend their eyes. It is a well ordered humor to wrest *Platos* writings, and straine his pretended negotiations with *Phedon*, *Dion*, *Stella*, *Archeanassa*. *Non pudeat dicere, quod non pudeat sentire. Let us not be ashamed to speake, what we shame not to thinke.* I hate a way ward and sad disposition, that glideth over the pleasures of his life, and fastens and feedes on miseries. As flyes that cannot cleave to a smooth and sleeke bodye, but seaze and holde on rugged and uneven places. Or as Cuppin-glasses, that affect and suck none but the worst bloud. For my part I am resolved to dare speake whatsoever I dare doe: And am displeased with thoughtes not to be published. The worst of my actions or condicions seeme not so ugly unto me, as I finde it both ugly and base not to dare to avouch them. *Every one is wary in the confession; we should be as heedy in the action.* The bouldnesse offending is somewhat recompensed and restrained by the bouldnesse of confessing. He that should be bound to tell all, should also binde himselfe to doe nothing which one is forced to conceale. God grant this excesse of my licence draw men to freedome, beyond these cowardly and squeamish vertues, sprung from our imperfections; and that by the expence of my immoderation, I may reduce them unto reason. *One must survey his faultes and study them, ere he be able to repeate them.* Those which hide them from others, commonly conceale them also from themselves; and esteeme them not sufficiently hidden, if themselves see them. They withdraw and disguise them from their owne consciences. *Quare uicia nemo confitetur? Quia etiam nunc in illis est, somnium narrare uigilantis est. Why doth no man confesse his faults? Because he is yet in them; and to declare his dreame, is for him that is waking.* The bodies evils are discerned by their increase. And now we finde that to be the goute which we termed the rheume or a bruse. The evils of the minde are darkened by their owne force; the most infected feeleth them least. Therfore is it, that they must oftē a day be handled, and violently be opened and rent from out the hollow of our bosomes. As in the case of good; so of bad offices, onely confession is sometimes a satisfaction. Is there any deformity in the error, which dispenseth us to confesse the same? It is a paine for mee to dissemble: so that I refuse to take charge of other mens secrets, as wāting hart to disavow my knowledge. I can conceale it; but deny it I cannot, without much a doe and some trouble. *To be perfectly secret, one must be so by nature, not by obligatiō.* It is a smal matter to be secret in the Princes service, if one be not also a liar. He that demanded *Thales Milesius*, whether he should solemnly deny his lechery; had he come to me, I would have answered him, he ought not do it: for a lie is in mine opinion, worse then lechery. *Thales* advised him otherwise, bidding him sweare, therby to warrant the more by the lesse. Yet was not his counsell so much the election, as multiplication of vice. Whereupon we sometimes use this by-word, that we deale wel with a man of conscience, when in coūterpoise of vice we propose some difficulty unto him; but whē he is inclosed between two vices, he is put to a hard choise. As *Origē* was dealt with all, either to cōmit idolatry, or suffer himself to be Sodomatically abused by a filthy Egiptian slave, that was presented unto him; he yielded to the first conditiō, and viciously, saith one. Therefore shold not those womē be distasted, according to their error, who of late protest, that they had rather charge their conscience with tē mē, thē one Masse. If it be indiscretiō so to divulge ones errors, there is no danger though it come into example and use, For *Ariston* said, that *The windes men*

feare most, are those which discover them. We must tuck up this homely ragge, that cloaketh our maners. They send their conscience to the stewes, and keepe their countenance in order. Even traitors and murtherers, observe the lawes of complements, and therto fixe their endeavors. So that neither can injustice complaine of incivility, nor malice of indiscretiō. T'is pittie a bad man is not also a foole, and that decencie should cloake his vice. These pargettings belong only to good and sound walles, such as deserve to be whited, to be preserved. In favor of *Hugonots*, who accuse our auricular and private confession, I confesse my selfe in publike; religiously and purely. Saint *Augustine*, *Origene*, and *Hippocrates*, have published their errors of their opinions; I likewise of my manners. I greedily long to make my selfe knowne; nor care I at what rate, so it be truly: or to say better, I hunger for nothing; but I hate mortally to be mistaken by such as shall happen to know my name. He that doth all for honor and glory, what thinks he to gaine by presenting himselfe unto the world in a maske, hiding his true being from the peoples knowledge? Commend a hulch-back for his comely stature, he ought to take it as an injury: if you be a coward, and one honoreth you for a valiant man, is it of you he speaketh? you are taken for another: I should like as wel, to have him glory in the courtesies and lowtings that are shewed him, supposing himselfe to be ring-leader of a troupe, whē he is the meanest folower of it. *Archelaus* king of *Macedō*, passing through a street, some body cast water upon him, was advised by his followers to punish the party: yea but (quoth he) who ever it was, he cast not the water upon me, but upon him he thought I was. *Socrates* to one that told him he was railed upon and ill spoken-of? Tush (said he) there is not such thing in me. For my part, should one commend me to be an excellent Pilote, to be very modest, or most chaste, I should owe him no thankes. Likewise should any man call me traitor, theefe or drūkard, I would deeme my selfe but little wronged by him. Those who misknow themselves, may feed themselves with false approbations; but not I, who see and search my selfe into my very bowels, and know full well what belongs unto me. I am pleased to be lesse commended, provided I be better knowne. I may be esteemed wise for such conditions of wisdom, that I account meere follies. It vexeth me, that my Essayes serve Ladies in lieu of common ware and stuffe for their hall: this Chapter will preferre me to their cabinet: I love their societie somewhat private; their publike familiaritie wants favor and savor. In farewells we heate above ordinary our affections to the things we forgoe. I heere take my last leave of this worlds pleasures: loe heere our last embraces. And now to our theame. Why was the acte of generation made so naturall, so necessary and so just, seeing we feare to speake of it without shame, and exclude it from our serious and regular discourses? we pronounce boldly, to rob, to murther, to betray; and this we dare not but betweene our teeth. Are we to gather by it, that the lesse we breath out in words, the more we are allowed to furnish our thoughts with? For words least used, least writen and least concealed, should best be understood, and most generally knowne. No age, no condition are more ignorant of it, then of their bread. They are imprinted in each one, without expressing, without voice or figure. And the sexe that doth it most, is most bound to suppress it. It is an action we have put in the precincts of silence, whence to draw it were an offence: not to accuse or judge it. Nor dare we beate it but in paraphrase and picture. A notable favor, to a criminall offender, to be so execrable, that justice deeme it injustice to touch and behold him, freed and saved by the

benefit of this condemnations severity. It is not herein as in matters of bookes, which being once called-in and forbidden become more saleable and publike? As for me, I will take *Aristotle* at his word, that *bashfulness* is an ornament to youth, but a reproache to age. These verses are preached in the old schoole; a schoole of which I hold more then of the moderne: her vertues seeme greater unto me, hir vices lesse.

*Ceux qui par trop fuiant Venus estrivent
Faillent autant que ceux qui trop la suivent.*

*Who strives ore much Venus to shunne, offends
Alike with him, that wholly hir intends.*

*Tu Dea, tu rerum naturam sola gubernas,
Nec sine te quicquam dias in luminis oras
Exoritur, neque fit lætum, nec amabile quicquam.*

*Goddesse, thou rul'st the nature of all things.
Without thee nothing into this light springs.
Nothing is lovely, nothing pleasures brings.*

I know not who could set *Pallas* and the *Muses* at oddes with *Venus*, and make them colde and flowe in affecting of love; as for me, I see no Deities that better sute together, nor more endebted one to another. Who-ever shall goe about to remoove amorous imaginations from the *Muses*, shall deprive them of the best entertainment they have, and of the noblest subject of their worke: and who shall debarre *Cupid* the service and conversation of Poesie, shall weaken him of his best weapons. By this meanes they caste upon the God of acquaintance, of amitie and goodwil; and upon the Goddesses, protectreses of humanitie, and justice, the vice of ingratitude, and imputation of churlishnesse. I have not so long beene cashiered from the state and service of this God, but that my memorie is still acquainted with the force of his worth and valour.

agnosco ueteris uestigia flammæ.

*I feele and feeling know,
How my old flames regrow.*

There commonly remaine some reliques of shivering and heate after an ague.

Nec mihi deficiat calor hic, hyemantibus annis.

*When Winter yeares come-on,
Let not this heate be gon.*

As drie, as sluggish and as unwieldie as I am, I feele yet some warme cinders of my passed heate.

*Qual' l'alto Ægeo perche Aquiloneo Noto
Cessi, che tutto prima il volse et scosse,
Non s'accheta ei però, ma il suono e'l moto,
Ritien de l'onde anco agitato et grosso.*

*As graund Ægean Sea, because the voice
Of windes doth cease, which it before enraged,
Yet doth not calme, but stil retaines the noise,
And motion of huge billowes unaswaged.*

But for so much as I know of it, the power and might of this God, are found more quicke and lively in the shadowe of the Poesie, then in their owne essence.

Et versus digitos habet.

*Verses have full effect,
Of fingers to erect.*

It representeth a kinde of ayre more lovely then love it selfe. *Venus* is not so faire, nor so alluring all naked, quick and panting, as she is here in *Virgill*.

*Dixerat, et niueis hinc atque hinc diua lacertis
Cunctantem amplexu molli fouet: Ille repente
Acceptit solitam flammam, notusque medullas
Intrauit calor, et labefacta per ossa cucurrit.
Non secus atque olim tonitru cùm rupta corusco,
Ignea rima micans percurrit lumine nimbos.*

*So said the Goddess, and with soft embrace,
Of Snow-white armes, the grim-fir doth enchase,
He streight tooke wonted fire, knowne heate at once,
His marrow pearc't, ranne through his weakned bones;
As firie flash with thunder doth deuide,
With radiant lightning through a storme doth glide.*

*ea uerba loquutus,
Optatos dedit amplexus, placidumque petiuit
Coniugis infusus gremio per membra soporem.*

*A sweete embrace, when he those words had said
He gave, and his limmes pleasing-rest he praid
To take in his wives bosome lolling-laide.*

What therein I finde to be considered, is, that he depainteth hir somewhat stirring for a maritall *Venus*. In this discreete match, appetites are not commonly so fondling; but drowsie and more sluggish. *Love* disdaineth a man should holde of other then himselfe, and dealeth but faintly with acquaintances begun and entertained under another title; as mariage is. Alliances, respects and meanes, by all reason, waighe as much or more, as the graces and beawtie. A man doth not marrie for himselfe, whatsoever he alledgeth; but as much or more for his posteritie and familie. The use and interest of mariage concerneth our off-spring, a great way beyond us. Therefore doth this fashion please me, to guide it rather by a third hand, and by anothers sence, then our owne: All which, how much doth it dissent from amorous conventions? Nor is it other then a kinde of incest, in this reverend alliance and sacred bonde, to employ the efforts and extravagant humors of an amorous licentiousnes, as I thinke to have said else-where. One should (saith *Aristotle*) touch his

wife soberlie, discreetly and severelie, least that tickling too laciviouslie, pleasure transport her beyond the bounds of reason. What he speaketh for conscience, Phisicians alledge for health: saying, that pleasure excessively whotte, voluptuous and continuall, altereth the seede, and hindereth conception. Some other say besides, that to a languishing congression (as naturallie that is) to store it with a convenient, and fertile heate, one must but seldome, and by moderate intermissions present himselfe unto it;

Quo rapiet sitiens uenerem interiusque recondat.

*Thirsting to snatch a fit,
And inly harbor it.*

I see no mariages faile sooner, or more troubled, then such as are concluded for beauties sake, and huddled up for amorous desires. There are required more solide foundations, and more constant grounds, and a more warie marching to it: this earnest youthly heate serveth to no purpose. Those who thinke to honour marriage, by joyning love unto it (in mine opinion) doe as those, who to doe vertue a favour, holde, that Nobilitie is no other thing then Vertue. Indeed these things have some affinitie; but therewithall great difference: their names and titles should not thus be commixt: both are wronged so to be confounded. *Nobilitie is a worthy, goodly qualitie, and introduced with good reason; but in as much as it dependeth on others, and may fall to the share of any vicious and worthlesse fellow, it is in estimation farre shorte of vertue.* If it be a vertue, it is artificiall and visible; relying both on time and fortune; divers in forme, according unto countries; living and mortall; without birth, as the river *Nilus*, genealogike and common; by succession and similitude; drawne along by consequence, but a very weake one. Knowledge, strength, goodnesse, beautie, wealth and all other qualities fall within compasse of commerce and communication: whereas this consumeth it selfe in it selfe, of no employment for the service of others. One proposed to one of our Kings the choise of two competitors in one office, the one a Gentleman, the other a Yeoman: he appointed that without respect unto that qualitie, he who deserved best should be elected; but were their valour or worth fully a-like, the Gentleman should be regarded: this was justlie to give nobilitie hir right and ranke. *Antigonus*, to an unknowne youngman, who sued unto him for his fathers charge, a man of valour and who was lately deceased: My friend (quoth he) in such good-turnes, *I waigh not my souldiers noble birth, so much as their sufficiencie.* Of truth it should not be herein, as with the officers of Spartan kings; Trompetors, Musitions, Cookes, in whose roome their children succeded, how ignorant soever, before the best experienced in the trade. Those of *Calicut* make of their nobility a degree above humane. Marriage is interdicted them, and all other vocations, saving warre. Of Concubines they may have as many as they list, and women as many lechardes, without Jelousie one of another. But it is a capitall crime, and unremissible offence to contract or marry with any of different condition: Nay they deeme themselves disparaged and polluted, if they have but touched them in passing-by. And as if their honour were much injured and interessed by it, they kill those who but approach some what to neare them. In such sort, that the ignoble are bound to cry as they walke along, like the *Gondoliers* or water-men of *Venice* along the streetes, least they should justle with them: and the

nobles commaund them to what side of the way they please. Thereby doe these avoyde an obloquie which they esteeme perpetuall; and those an assured death. *No continuance of time, no favour of Prince, no office, no vertue, nor any wealth can make a clowne to become a gentleman.* Which is much furthered by this custome, that marriages of one trade with another are stricktlye forbidden. A Shoo-maker cannot marry with the race of a Carpenter; and parents are precisely bound to traine up orphanes in their fathers trade, and in no other. Whereby the difference, the distinction and continuance, of their fortune is maintained. A good marriage (if any there be) refuseth the company and conditions of love; it endevoureth to present those of amity. It is a sweete society of life, full of constancie, of trust, and an infinite number of profitable and solid offices, and mutuall obligations: No woman that throughly and impartialy tasteth the same,

Optato quam iunxit lumine tæda.

*Whom loves-fire joyned in double band,
With wished light of marriage brand.*

would forgoe her estate to be her husbands maister. Be she lodged in his affection, as a wife, she is much more honourably and surely lodged. Be a man passionately entangled in any unlawful lust or love, let him then be demanded on whom he would rather have some shame or disgrace to alight; eyther on his lawfull wife, or on his lechard mistris, whose misfortune would afflict him most, and to whom he wisheth greater good or more honour. These questions admit no doubt in an absolute sound marriage. *The reason we see so few good, is an apparent signe of it's worth, and a testimony of it's price.* Perfectly to fashion and rightly to take it, is the worthiest and best part of our society. We cannot be without it, and yet we disgrace and vilifie the same. It may be compared to a cage, the birdes without dispaire to get in, and those within dispaire to get out. *Socrates* being demanded, whether was most commodious, to take, or not to take a wife; *Which soever a man doth* (quoth he) *he shall repent it.* It is a match wherto may well be applied the common saying, *homo homini aut Deus, aut Lupus.* *Man unto man is either a God or a Wolfe.* To the perfect erecting whereof are the concurrences of divers qualities required: It is now a dayes found most fit or commodious for simple mindes and popular spirits, whom dainties, curiosity and idlenesse doe not so much trouble. Licentious humours, debaushed conceits (as are mine) who hate all manner of duties, bondes, or observances are not so fit, so proper, and so sutable for it.

Et mihi dulce magis resolutio uiuere collo.

Sweeter it is to me, with loose necke to live free.

Of mine owne disposition, would wisdom it selfe have had me, I should have refused to wed her. But we may say our pleasure; the custome and use of common life overbeareth us. Most of my actions are guided by example, and not by election: Yet did I not properly envite my selfe unto it, I was led and brought thereunto by strange and unexpected occasions: For, *not onely incommodious things, but foule, vicious and inevitable, may by some condition and accident become acceptable and allowed.* So vaine is mans posture and defence. And truly I was then drawne unto it, being but ill

prepared and more backward, then now I am, that have made triall of it. And as licentious as the world reputes me, I have (in good truth) more stricktly observed the lawes of wedlock, then either I had promised or hoped. *It is no longer time to wince whē one hath put on the shackles.* A mā ought wisely to husband his liberty; but after he hath once submitted himselfe unto bondage, he is to stick unto it by the lawes of common duty or at least enforce himselfe to keepe them. Those which undertake that covenant to deale therein with hate and contempt, do both unjustly and incommodiously. And that goodly rule I see passe from hand to hand among women, as a sacred oracle,

*Sers ton mary comme maistre:
Et t'en garde comme d'un traistre.*

*Your husband as your maister serve-ye:
From him as from false friend preserve-ye.*

which is as much to say; Beare thy selfe toward him with a constrained, enemy and distrustfull reverence (a stile of warre, and cry of defiance) is likewise injurious and difficult. I am to milde for such crabbed dissignes. To say truth, I am not yet come to that perfection of sufficiencie and quaintnesse of wit, as to confound reason with injustice: and laugh or scofe at each order or rule, that jumps not with my humour. To hate superstition, I doe not presently cast my selfe into irreligion. If one doe not alwayes discharge his duety, yet ought he at least ever love, ever acknowledge it: *It is treason for one to marry unlesse he wed.* But go we on. Our poet describeth a marriage full of accord and good agreement, wherein notwithstanding there is not much loyalty. Did he meane it was not possible to performe loves rights, and yet reserve some rightes toward marriage; and that one may bruse it, without altogether breaking it? A servant may picke his maisters purse, and yet not hate him. Beauty, opportunity, destiny (for destiny hath also a hand therein,)

*fatum est in partibus illis.
Quas sinus abscondit; nam si tibi fidera cassent,
Nil faciet longi mensura incognita nerui.*

*In those partes there is fate, which hidden are;
If then thou be not wrought-for by thy starre,
The measure of long nerves, unknowne to nothing serves.*

have entangled a woman to a stranger, yet peradventure not so absolutely but that some bond may be left to hold her to her husband. They are two dissignes, having severall and unconfounded pathes leading to them. A woman may yeelde to such a man, whome in no case she would have married. I meane not for the conditions of his fortune, but for the qualities of his person. Few men have wedded their sweete harts, their paramours or mistrisses, but have come home by weeping Crosse, and ere long repented their bargayne. And even in the other world, what an unquiet life leades *Jupiter* with his wife, whome before he had secretly knowne, and lovingly enjoied? This is as they say, *to bewray the panier, and then put it on your head.* My selfe have seene in some good place, love, shamefully and dishonestly cured by marriage: the considerations are to much different. We love without disturbance to our selves; two dyvers and

in themselves contrary things. *Isocrates* saide, that the towne of *Athens* pleased men, even as Ladies doe whom we serve for affection. Every one loved to come thither, to walke and passe away the time: but none affected to wed it: that is to say, to endenison, to dwell and habituate himselfe therein. I have (and that to my spight and grieve) seene husbands hate their wives, onely because themselves wronged them: Howsoever, we should not love them lesse for our faults; at least for repentance and compassion they ought to be dearer unto us. These are different endes (saith he) and yet in some sort compatible. Wedlocke hath for his share honour, justice, profit and constancie: a playne, but more generall delight. Love melts in onely pleasure; and truly it hath it more ticklishe, more lively, more quaint, and more sharpe: a pleasure inflamed by difficulty: there must be a kinde of stinging, tingling and smarting. *It is no longer love, be it once without arrowes, or without fire.* The liberality of Ladyes is to profuse in marriage, and blunts the edge of affection and desire. To avoide this inconvenience, see the punishment inflicted by the lawes of *Lycurgus* and *Plato*. But women are not altogether in the wrong, when they refuse the rules of life prescribed to the world, forsomuch as onely men have established them without their consent. There is commonly brauling and contention betweene them and us. And the nearest consent we have with them, is but stormye and tumultuous. In the opinion of our author, we herein use them but inconsiderately. After we have knowne, that without comparison they are much more capable and violent in loves-effectes, then we, as was testified by that auncient Priest, who had beene both man and woman, and tried the passions of both sexes.

Venus huic erat utraque nota:

Of both sortes he knew venery.

And have moreover learned by their owne mouth, what tryall was made of it, though in divers ages, by an Emperour and an Empresse of *Rome*, both skilfull and famous maisters in lawlesse lust and unrulye wantonnesse; for he in one night deflowred ten *Sarmatian* virgines, that were his captives; but shee realy did in one night also, answer five and twenty severall assaults, changing her assailants as she found cause to supplye her neede, or fitte her taste,

*adhuc ardens rigidæ tentigine uulvæ
Et lassata uiris, non dum satiata recessit.*

and that uppon the controversie happened in *Catologne*, betweene a wife and a husband; she complaining on his over violence and continuance therein (not so much in my conceite, because she was thereby overlabored (for but by faith I beleieve not miracles) as under this pretext, to abridge and bridle the authority of husbands over their wives, which is the fundamental part of marriage: And to show that their frowning, sullenness and peevishness exceede the very nuptiall bed, and trample under-foote the very beauties, graces and delightes of *Venus*; to whose complaint, her husband, a right churlish and rude fellow answered, that even on fasting dayes he must needes do it ten times at least) was by the Queene of *Aragon* given this notable sentence: by which after mature deliberatiō of counsel, the good Queene to establish a rule and imitable example unto all posterity, for the moderation and required modesty in a

lawfull marriage; ordained the number of sixe times a day, as a lawfull, necessary and competent limit. Releasing and diminishing a great part of her sexes neede and desire: to establish (quoth she) an easie forme, and consequently permanent and immutable. Here upon doctors cry out, what is the appetite and lust of women, when as their reason, their reformation and their vertue, is retailed at such a rate? considering the divers judgement of our desires: for *Solon* maister of the lawiers schoole alloweth but three times a moneth, because this matrimonial entercourse should not decay or faile. Now after we have beleevd (say I) and preached thus much, we have for their particular portion allotted them continencie; as their last and extreame penalty. There is no passion more importunate then this, which we would have them only to resist: Not simply, as a vice in it selfe, but as abomination and execration, and more then irreligion and parricide; whilst we our selves without blame or reproach offend in it at our pleasure. Even those amongst us, who have earnestly labored to overcome lust, have sufficiently vowed, what difficulty, or rather unresistable impossibility they found in it; using nevertheles material remedies, to tame, to weaken and coole the body. And we on the other side would have them sound, healthy, strong, in good liking, wel-fed and chaste together, that is to say, both hotte and colde. For, marriage which we averre should hinder them from burning, affords them but small refreshing, according as our manners are. If they meete with a husband, whose force by reason of his age is yet boyling, he will take a pride to spend it else-where:

*Sit tandem pudor, aut eamus in ius,
Multis mentula millibus redempta,
Non est hæc tua, Basse, uendidisti.*

The Philosopher *Polemon* was justly called in question by his wife, for sowing in a barren field the fruite due to the fertile. But if they match with broken stuffe in full wedlocke, they are in worse case then either virgines or widowes. We deeme them sufficiently furnished, if they have a man lie by them. As the Romans reputed *Clodia Læta* a vestall virgine deflowered, whom *Caligula* had touched, although it was manifestly proved, he had but approached her: But on the contrary, their neede or longing is thereby encreased; for but the touch or company of any man whatsoever stirreth up their heate, which in their solitude was husht and quiet, and laye as cinders raked up in ashes. And to the ende, as it is likely, to make by this circumstance and consideration their chastitie more merytorious: *Boleslaus* and *King* ye his wife, King and Queene of *Polande*, lying together the first day of their mariage vowed it with mutuall consent, and in despight of all wedlocke commodities of nuptiall-delightes maintained the same. Even from their infancie we frame them to the sportes of love: their instruction, behaviour, attire, grace, learning and all their wordes aymeth onely at love, respects onely affection. Their nurces and their keepers, imprint no other thing in them, then the lovelinesse of love, were it but by continually presenting the same unto them, to distaste them of it: My daughter (all the children I have) is of the age wherein the lawes excuse the forwardest to mary. She is of a slowe, nice and milde complexion, and hath accordingly beene brought up by hir mother, in a retired and particular manner: so that she beginneth but now to put-off childish simplicitie. She was one day reading a *French* booke before me, an obscene word came in hir way

(more bawdie in sound then in effect, for it signifieth the name of a Tree and another thing) the woman that lookes to hir, staid hir presently, and somewhat churlishly making hir step over the same: I let hir alone, because I would not crosse their rules, for I medle nothing with this government; womens policie hath a misticall proceeding, we must be content to leave it to them. But if I be not deceived, the conversation of twenty laqueis could not in six moneths have setled in hir thoughts, the understanding, the use and consequences of the sound belonging to those filthy silables, as did that good olde woman by hir check and interdiction.

*Motus doceri gaudet Ionicos
Matura uirgo, et frangitur artubus
Iam nunc, et incestos amores
De tenero meditatur ungui.*

*Maides mariage-ripe straight to be taught delight
Ionique daunces, fram'de by arte aright
In every joynt, and eu' n from their first haire
Incestuous loves in meditation beare.*

Let them somewhat dispence with cerimonies, let them fall into free libertie of speach; we are but children, we are but gullies, in respect of them, about any such subject. Heare them relate how we sue, how we wooe, how we sollicite and how we entertaine them, they will soone give you to understand, that we can say, that we can doe, and that we can bring them nothing, but what they already knew, and had long before digested without us. May it be (as *Plato* saith) because they have one time or other beene themselves wanton, licentious and amorous lads? Mine eares hapned one day in a place, where without suspition they might listen and steale some of their private, lavish and bould discourses; oh why is it not lawfull for me to repeate them? Birlady¹ (quoth I to my selfe) It is high time indeede for us to goe studie the phrases of *Amadis*, the metaphors of *Aretine* and eloquence of *Boccace*, thereby to become more skilfull, more ready and more sufficient to confront them: surely we bestowe our time well; there is nor quaint phrase, nor choise worde, nor ambiguous figure, nor patheticall example, nor love-expressing gesture, nor alluring posture, but they knowe them all better then our bookes: It is a cunning bred in their vaines and will never out of the flesh,

Et mentem Venus ipsa dedit.

*Venus hir selfe assign'de,
To them both meanes and minde.*

which these skill-infusing Schoole-mistrisses nature, youth, health and opportunitie, are ever buzzing in their eares, ever whispering in their mindes: They neede not learne, not take paines about it; they beget it; with them it is borne.

*Nec tantum niueo gauisa est nulla columbo
Compar, uel si quid dicitur improbius,
Oscula mordenti semper decerpere rostro:
Quantum præcipuè multiuola est mulier.*

*No Pigeons hen, or paire, or what worse name
 You list, makes with hir Snow-white cock such game,
 With biting bill to catch when she is kist,
 As many-minded women when they list.*

Had not this naturall violence of their desires bin somewhat held in awe, by feare and honor, wherewith they have beene provided, we had all beene defamed. All the worlds motions bend and yeelde to this conjunction: it is a matter every-where infused; and a Centre whereto all lines come, all things looke. The ordonances of ancient and wise *Rome*, ordained for the service and instituted for the behoofe of love, are yet to be seene: together with the precepts of *Socrates* to instruct courtizans.

*Nec non libelli Stoici inter sericos,
 Iacere puluillos amant.*

*Ev'n Stoicks bookes are pleas'de
 Amidst silke cushions to be eas'd.*

Zeno among other lawes, ordred also the struglings, the opening of legges, and the actions, which hapen in the deflowring of a virgin. Of what sence was the booke of *Strato* the Philosopher, of carnall copulation? and whereof treated *Theophrastus* in those he entitled, one *The Lover*, the other, *Of Love*? whereof *Aristippus* in his volume *Of ancient deliciousnesse or sports*? what implied or what imported the ample and lively descriptions in *Plato*, of the loves practised in his dayes? And the lover of *Demetrius Phalereus*? And *Clinias*, or the forced lover of *Heraclides Ponticus*? And that of *Antisthenes*, of the getting of children, or of weddings? And the other, *Of the Maister or of the lover*? And that of *Aristo*, *Of amorous exercises*? Of *Cleanthes*, one of love, another of the arte of love? The amorous dialogues of *Spherus*? And the filthy intolerable, and without blushing not to be uttered fable of *Jupiter* and *Juno*, written by *Chrysippus*? And his so lascivious fiftie Epistles? I will omit the writings of some Philosophers, who have followed the sect of *Epicurus*, protectresse of all manner of sensualitye and carnall pleasure. Fiftie severall Deities were in times past allotted to this office. And there hath bin a nation found, which to allay and coole the lustfull concupiscence of such as came for devotion, kept wenches of purpose in their temples to be used; and it was a point of religion to deale with them before one went to prayers. *Nimirum propter continentiam incontinentia necessaria est, incendium ignibus extinguitur. Belike we must be incontinent that we may be continent, burning is quenched by fire.* In most places of the world, that part of our body was Deified. In that same province, some flead it to offer, and consecrated a piece thereof; others offred and consecrated their seede. In another the young-men did publicly pearce, and in divers places open their yarde betweene flesh and skin, and through the holes put the longest and biggest stickes they could endure, and of those stickes made afterward a fire, for an offring to their Gods, and were esteemed of small vigor and lesse chastity, if by the force of that cruell paine they shewed any dismay. Else-where, the most sacred magistrate was revered and acknowledged by those parts. And in divers ceremonies the portraiture thereof was caryed and shewed in pompe and state, to the honour of sundry Deities. The Egiptian dames in their *Bacchanalian* feasts wore a wodden one about their necks, exquisitly fashioned, as huge and heaveie as every one could conveniently beare:

besides that which the statue of their God represented, which in measure exceeded the rest of his body. The married women here-by, with their *Coverchefs* frame the figure of one upon their foreheads; to glory themselves with the enjoying they have of it; and comming to be widdowes, they place it behinde, and hide it under their quoifes. The greatest and wisest matrons of *Rome*, were honored for offering flowers and garlands to God *Priapus*. And when their virgines were married, they (during the nuptials) were made to sit upon their privities. Nor am I sure, whether in my time, I have not seene a glimpse of like devotion. What meant that laughter-mooving, and maides looke-drawing piece our Fathers wore in their breeches, yet extant among the *Switzers*? To what end is at this present day the shoue of our formall pieces under our Gascoine hoses? and often (which is worse) above their naturall greatnesse, by falsehood and imposture? A little thing would make me beleeeve, that the saide kinde of garment was invented in the best and most upright ages, that the worlde might not be deceived, and all men should yeeld a publike account of their sufficiencie. The simplest nations have it yet somewhat resembling the true forme. Then was the worke-mans skill instructed, how it is to bee made, by the measure of the arme or foot. That good-meaning man, who in my youth, throughout his great cittie, caused so many faire, curious and ancient statues to bee guelded, left the Sense of seeing might bee corrupted, following the advice of that other good ancient man;

Flagitii principium est nudare inter ciues corpora:

*Mongst civill people sinne,
By baring bodies we beginne.*

should have considered, how in the mysteries of the good Goddess, all apparance of man was excluded; that hee was no whit neerer, if hee did not also procure both horses and asses, and at length nature hir selfe to be guelded.

*Omne adeo genus in terris, hominúmque, ferarúmque,
Et genus æquoreum, pecudes, pictæque uolucres,
In furias ignémque ruunt.*

*All kindes of things on earth, wilde beasts, man-kinde,
Field-beasts, faire-fethered fowle, and fish (we finde)
Into loves fire and furie runne by kinde.*

The Gods (saith *Plato*) have furnished man with a disobedient, skittish, and tyrannicall member; which like an untamed-furious beast, attempteth by the violence of his appetite, to bring all things under his beck. So have they allotted women another as insulting, wilde and fierce; in nature like a greedie, devouring and rebellious creature, who if when he craveth it, he be refused nourishment, as impacient of delay, it enrageth; and infusing that rage into their bodies, stoppeth their conduits, hindreth their respiration, and causeth a thousand kindes of inconveniences; untill sucking up the fruite of the generall thirst, it have largely bedewed and enseeded the bottom of their matrix. Now my law-giver should also have considered, that peradventure it were a more chaste and commodiously-fruitfull use, betimes to give them a knowledge and taste of the quick; then

according to the libertie and heate of their fantazie, suffer them to guesse and imagine the same. In lieu of true essentiall parts, they by desire surmise, and by hope substitute others, three times as extravagant. And one of my acquaintance was spoiled, by making open shewe of his in place, where yet it was not convenient to put them in possession of their more serious use. What harme cause not those huge draughts or pictures, which wanton youths with chalke or coales draw in each passage, walle, or staires of our great houses? whence a cruell contempt of our naturall store is bred in them. Who knoweth, whether *Plato* ordaining amongst other well instituted Common-wealths, that men and women, olde and yoong, should in their exercises or *Gymnastickes*, present themselves naked one to the sight of another, aymed at that or no? The Indian women, who dayly without interdiction view their men all over, have at least wherewith to assuage and coole the sense of their seeing. And whatsoever the women of that great kingdome of *Pegu* say, who from their waste downeward, have nothing to cover themselves but a single cloath slit before; and that so straight, that what nice modestie, or cerimonious decencie soever they seeme to affect, one may plainely at each steppe see what God hath sent them: that it is an invention or shift devised to drawe men unto them, and with-drawe them from other men or boyes, to which unnaturall brutish sinne that nation is wholly adicted: it might be sayd, they loose more then they get: and that *a full hunger is more vehement, then one which hath beene glutted, be it but by the eyes*. And *Livia* sayd, that to an honest woman, a naked man is no more then an Image. The Lacedemonian women, more virgin-wives, then are our maidens, sawe every-day the young men of their cittie, naked at their exercises; themselves nothing precise to hide their thighes in walking, esteeming themselves (saith *Plato*) sufficiently cloathed with their vertue, without vardingall. But those, of whom Saint *Augustine* speaketh, have attributed much to nakednesse, who made a question, whether women at the last day of judgement, should rise againe in their proper sexe, and not rather in ours, least even then they tempt us in that holy state. In summe, we lure and every way flesh them: we uncessantly enflame and encite their imagination: and then we crye out, *but oh, but oh the belly*. Let us confesse the trueth, there are fewe amongst us, that feare not more the shame, they may have by their wives offences, then by their owne vices; or that cares not more (oh wondrous charitie) for his wives, then his owne conscience; or that had not rather be a theefe and church-robber, and have his wife a murderer and an heretike, then not more chaste then himselfe. Oh impious estimation of vices. Both we and they are capable of a thousand more hurtfull and unnaturall corruptions, then is lust or lasciviousnesse. But we frame vices and waigh sinnes, not according to their nature, but according to our interest; whereby they take so many different unequall formes. The severity of our lawes makes womens inclination to that vice, more violent and faultie, then it's condition beareth; and engageth it to worse proceedings then is their cause. They will readily offer rather to follow the practise of lawe, and plead at the barre for a fee, or goe to the warres for reputation, then in the midst of idlenesse and deliciousnesse be tide to keepe so hard a Sentinell, so dangerous a watch. See they not plainely, how there is neither Merchant, Lawier, Souldior, or church-man, but will leave his accompts, forsake his client, quit his glory and neglect his function, to follow this other businesse? And the burthen-bearing porter, souterlie cobbler, and toylefull labourer, all harassed, all besmeared, and all bemoyled, through

travell, labour and trudging, will forget all, to please himselfe with this pleasing sporte?

*Num tu quæ tenuit diues Achæmenes,
Aut Pinguis Phrygice Mygdonias opes,
Permutare uelis crine Licinnia,
Plenas aut Arabum domos,
Dum fragrantia detorquet ad oscula
Ceruicem, aut facili sæuitia negat,
Quæ poscente magis gaudeat eripi,
Interdum rapere occupet?*

*Would you exchange for your faire mistressse haire,
All that the riche Achæmenes did holde,
Or all that fertill Phrygias soile doth beare,
Or all th'Arabians store of spice and golde?
Whilst she to fragrant kisses turnes her head,
Or with a courteous coyntesse them denies;
Which more then he that speeds she would have sped,
And which sometimes to snatch she formost hies?*

I wotte not whether *Cesars* exploits, or *Alexanders* atchivements exceede in hardinesse the resolution of a beautious young-woman, trained after our manner, in the open view and uncontrouled conversation of the world, solicited and battered by so many contrary examples, exposed to a thousand assaults and continuall pursuities, and yet still holding hir selfe good and unvanquished. *There is no point of dooing more thornie, nor more active, then this of not dooing. I finde it easier, to beare all ones life a combersome armor on his back, then a mayden-head. And the vowe of virginitie, is the noblest of all vowes, because the hardest. Diaboli uirtus in lumbis est: The diuels maister-point lyes in our loynes, saith Saint Jerome.* Surely we have resigned the most difficult and vigorous devoire of mankinde unto women, and quit them the glory of it, which might stead them as a singular motive to opionate themselves therein: and serve them as a worthy subject to brave us, and trample under feet that vaine preheminance of valour and vertue we pretend over them. They shall finde (if they but heed it) that they shall thereby not onely be highly regarded, but also more beloved. A gallant undaunted spirite leaveth not his pursuities for a bare refusall; so it be a refusall of chastitie, and not of choise. We may sweare, threaten and wailingly complaine; we lye, for we love them the better. *There is no enticing lure to wisdom and secret modestie;* so it be not rude, churlish, and froward. It is blockishnesse and basenesse to be obstinately-wilfull against hatred and contempt: But against a vertuous and constant resolution, matched with an acknowledging minde, it is the exercise of a noble and generous minde. They may accept of our service unto a certaine measure, and make us honestly perceive how they disdain us not: for, the lawe which joyneth them to abhorre us, because we adore them; and hate us, forsomuch as we love them; is doubtlesse very cruell, were it but for it's difficultie. Why may they not listen to our offers, and not gaine-say our requests, so long as they containe themselves within the bounds of modestie? wherefore should we imagine, they inwardly affect a freer meaning? A Queene of our time said wittily, that *to refuse mens kinde summons, is a testimonie of much weaknesse, and an accusing of ones owne facilitie: and that an unattempted Lady*

could not vante of hir chastitie. Honours-limits are not restrained so shorte; they may somewhat be slacked, and without offending somewhat dispensed withall. At the end of his frontiers, there is left a free, indifferent, and newter space. He that could drive and force his mistris into a corner, and reduce hir into hir fort, hath no great matter in him, if he be not content with his fortune. *The price or honour of the conquest is rated by the difficultie.* Will you knowe what impression your merites, your services and worthe, have made in hir heart? judge of it by hir behaviour and disposition.

Some one may give more, that (all things considered) giveth not so much. *The obligation of a benefite hath wholie refference unto the will of him that giveth:* other circumstances which fall within the compasse of good-turnes, are dumbe, dead and casuall. That little she giveth may cost hir more, then all hir companion hath. If rarenesse be in any thing worthy estimation, it ought to be in this. Respect not how little it is, but how few have it to give. The value of money is changed according to the coyne, stampe or marke of the place. Whatsoever the spight or indiscretion of some, may upon the excesse of their discontentment, make them say; *Vertue and truth doe ever recover their advantage.* I have knowne some, whose reputation hath long time beene impeached by wrong, and interessd by reproche, restored unto all mens good opinion and generall approbation, without care or arte, onely by their constancie; each repenting and denying what he formerly believed. From wenches somewhat suspected, they now holde the first ranke amongst honourable Ladies. Some tolde *Plato*, that all the world spake ill of him; *Let them say what they list* (quoth he) *I will so live, that Ile make them recant and change their speeches.* Besides the feare of God, and the rewarde of so rare a glory, which should incite them to preserve themselves, the corruption of our age enforceth them unto it: and were I in their clothes, there is nothing but I would rather doe, then commit my reputation into so dangerous hands. In my time, the pleasure of reporting and blabbing what one hath done (a pleasure not much shorte of the acte it selfe in sweetnesse) was onely allowed to such as had some assured, trustie and singular friend; whereas now-a-dayes, the ordinary entertainments and familiar discourses of meetings and at tables, are the boastings of favoures received, graces obtained and secret liberalities of Ladyes. Verily it is too great an objection, and argueth a basenesse of harte, so fiercelie to suffer those tender, dayntie, delicious joyes, to bee persecuted, pelted, and foraged by persons so ungratefull, so undiscree, and so giddy-headed. This our immoderate and lawlesse exasperation against this vice, proceedeth and is bred of jelousie; the most vaine and turbulent infirmitie that may afflict mans minde.

*Quis uetat appposito lumen de lumine sumi?
Dent licet assidue, nil tamen inde perit.*

*To borrow light of light, who would deny?
Though still they give, nothing is lost thereby.*

That, and Envie her sister, are (in mine opinion) the fondest of the troupe. Of the latter, I cannot say much; a passion which how effectuall and powerfull soever they set forth; of hir good favour she medleth not with me. As for the other, I know it onely by sight. Beasts have some feeling of it. The shepheard *Cratis* being fallen in love with a shee Goate, hir Buck

for jealousie, beate out his braines as he lay asleepe. We have raised to the highest straine the excesse of this moodie feaver, after the example of some barbarous nations: The best disciplined have therewith beene tainted, it is reason; but not caried away by it:

*Ense maritali nemo confossus adulter,
Purpureo stygias sanguine tinxit aquas.*

*With husbands sworde yet no adultrer slaine,
With purple blood did Stygian waters staine.*

Lucullus, Cesar, Pompey, Anthonie, Cato, and divers other gallant men were Cuckoldes, and knew it, though they made no stirre about it. There was in all that time but one gullish coxcombe *Lepidus*, that dyed with the anguish of it.

*Ah tum te miserum malique fati,
Quem attractis pedibus patente porta,
Percurrent mugilésque raphanique.*

*Ah thee then wretched, of accursed fate
Whom Fish-wives, Redish-wives of base estate,
Shall scoffing over-runne in open gate.*

And the God of our Poets, when he surprised one of his companions napping with his wife, was contented but to shame them:

*Atque aliquis de Diis non tristibus optat,
Sic fieri turpis.*

*Some of the merier Gods doth wish in hart,
To share their shame, of pleasure to take part.*

And yet forbearer not to be enflamed with the gentle daliances, and amorous blandishments she offereth him, complaining that for so slight a matter he should distrust hir to him deare-deare affection:

*Quid causas petis ex alto? fiducia cessit
Quo tibi Diua mei?*

*So farre why fetch you your pleas pedigree?
Whether is fled the trust you had in me?*

And which is more, she becomes a suiter to him in the behalfe of a bastard of hers,

Arma rogo genitrix nato.

*A mother for a sonne, I crave,
An armor he of you may have.*

Which is freely granted hir: And *Vulcan* speakes honourably of *Eneas*:

Arma acri facienda uiro.

*An armor must be hammered-out,
For one of courage sterne and stoute.*

In truth with an humanitie, more then humane. And which excesse of goodnesse by my consent shall only be left to the Gods:

Nec diuis homines componier æquum est.

*Nor is it meete, that men with Gods
Should be compar'd, there is such ods.*

As for the confusion of children, besides that the gravest law-makers appoint and affect it in their Common-wealths, it concerneth not women, with whom this passion is, I wot not how, in some sorte better placed, fitter seated.

*Sæpe etiam Iuno maxima cœlicolum
Coniugis in culpa flagrauit quotidiana.*

*Ev'n Juno chiefe of Goddesses oft time,
Hath growne hotte at hir husbands dayly crime.*

When jealousie once seazeth on these sillie, weake, and unresisting soules, 'tis pittifull, to see, how cruelly it tormenteth, how insultingly it tyrranizeth them. It insinuateth it selfe under collour of friendship: but after it once possesseth them, the same causes which served for a ground of good-will, serve for the foundation of mortall hatred. *Of all the mindes diseases, that is it, whereto most things serve for sustenance, and fewest for remedy.* The vertue, courage, health, merite and reputation of their husbands, are the firebrands of their despight, and motives of their rage.

Nullæ sunt inimicitia nisi amoris acerbæ.

*No enmities so bitter prove,
And sharpe, as those which spring of love.*

This consuming feaver blemisheth and corrupteth all that otherwise is good and goodly in them. And how chaste or good a huswife soever a jealous woman is, there is no action of hers, but tasteth of sharpnesse and smaks of importunity. It is a furious perturbation, a moody agitation, which throwes them into extremities altogether contrary to the cause. The successe of one *Octavius* in *Rome* was strange, who having layen with, and enjoyed the love of *Pontia Posthumia*, increased his affection by enjoying her, and instantly sued to marry her; but being unable to perswade her, his extreame passionate love precipitated him into effects of a most cruell, mortall and inexorable hatred; whereupon he killd her. Likewise the ordinary *Symptomes* or passions of this other amorous disease, are intestine hates, slye *Monopolies*, close conspiracies:

Notumque, furens quid fœmina possit.

*It is knowne what a woman may,
Whose raging passions have no stay.*

And a raging spight, which so much the more fretteth itselfe, by being forced to excuse it selfe under pretence of good-will. Now the duty of chastity hath a large extension and farre-reaching compasse. Is it their will, we would have them to bridle? That's a part very plyable and active. It is very nimble and quick-rouling to be stayed. What? If dreames do sometimes engage them so farre, as they cannot dissemble nor deny them; It lyeth not in them (nor perhaps in chastity it selfe, seeing she is a female) to shield themselves from concupiscence and avoyde desiring. If onely their will interesse and engage us, where and in what case are we? Imagine what great throng of men there would be, in pursuite of this priviledge, with winged-speede (though without eyes and without tongue) to be conveighed upon the point of every woman that would buy him. The Scythian women were wont to thrust out the eyes of all their slaves and prisoners taken in warre, thereby to make more free and private use of them. *Oh what a furious advantage is opportunitie!* He that should demaund of me, what the chiefe or first part in love is, I would answer, *To knowe how to take fit time;* even so the second, and likewise the third. It is a point which may doe all in all. I have often wanted fortune, but sometimes also enterprise. God shield him from harme, that can yet mocke himselfe with it. In this age more rashnesse is required; which our youths excuse under collour of heate. But should our women looke neerer unto it, they might finde, how it rather proceedeth of contempt. I supersticiouslie feared to offend; and what I love, I willingly respect. Besides that, who depriveth this marchandize of reverence, defaceth all luster of it. I love that a man should therein somewhat play the child, the dastard and the servant. If not altogether in this, yet in some other things I have some aires or motives of the sottish bashfulnesse, whereof *Plutarch* speaketh; and the course of my life hath diverslie bin wounded and tainted by it: a qualitie very ill-beseeming my universall forme. And *what is there amongst us, but sedition and jarring?* Mine eyes be as tender to beare a refusall, as to refuse; and it doth so much trouble me to be troublesome to others, that where occasions force me or duty compelleth me to trie the wil of any one, be it in doubtfull things, or of cost unto him, I do it but faintly and much against my will: But if it be for mine owne private businesse (though *Homer* say most truly, that *in an indigent or needie man, bashfulnesse is but a fond vertue*) I commonly substitute a third party, who may blush in my roome: and direct them that employ me, with like difficultie: so that it hath sometimes befallne me, *to have the will to deny, when I had not powre to refuse.* It is then folly, to goe about to bridle women of a desire, so fervent and so naturall in them. And when I heare them bragge to have so virgin-like a will and colde minde, I but laugh and mocke at them. They recoyle too farre backward. If it be a toothlesse beldam or decrepite grandame, or a young drye, tisque starveling; if it be not altogether credible, they have at least some collour or apparance to say it. But those which stirre about, and have a little breath left them, marre but their market with such stuffe: Forsomuch as *inconsiderate excuses, are no better then accusations.* As a Gentleman my neighbour, who was suspected of insufficiencie,

*Languidior tenera cui pendens sicala beta,
Nunquam se mediam sustulis ad tunicam.*

to justifie himselfe, three or foure dayes after his mariage, swore confidently, that the night before, he had performed twentie courses:

which oathe hath since served to convince him of meere ignorance, and to divorce him from his wife. Besides, this allegation is of no great worth: For, *there is nor continencie nor vertue, where no resistance is to the contrary*. It is true, may one say, but I am not ready to yeeld. The Saints themselves speake so. This is understood of such as boast in good earnest of their coldnesse and insensibilitie, and would be credited with a serious countenance: for, when it is from an affected looke (where the eyes give words the lye) and from the faltring speach of their profession (which ever workes against the woll) I allow of it. I am a duteous servant unto plainnesse, simplicitie and liberty: but there is no remedie, if it be not meerly plaine, simple or infantine; it is fond, inept and unseemly for Ladies in this commerce: it presently inclineth and bendeth to impudencie. Their disguisings, their figures and dissimulations cozen none but fooles; there lying sitteth in the chaire of honour; it is a by-way, which by a false posterne leades us unto truth. If we cannot containe their imaginations, what require we of them? the effects? Many there be, who are free from all strangers-communication, by which chastitie may be corrupted, and honestie defiled.

Illud sæpe facit, quod sine teste facit.

*What she doth with no witnesse to it,
She often may be found to do-it.*

And those whom we feare least, are per adventure most to be feared: Their secret sins are the worst.

Offendor mæcha simpliciore minus.

*Pleas'd with a whores simplicitie,
Offended with hir nicitie.*

There are effects, which without impuritie may loose them their pudicitie; and which is more, without their knowledge. *Obstetrix uirginis cuiusdam integritatem manu uelut explorans, siue maleuolentia, siue inscitia, siue casu, dum inspicit, perdidit: A Midwife searching with her finger into a certaine maidens virginity, either for ill will, or of unskilfulnesse, or by chance, whilst she seekes and lookes into it, she lost and spoilde it.* Some one hath lost or wronged her virginity in looking or searching for it; some other killed the same in playing with it. We are not able precisely to circumscribe them the actions we forbid them: Our law must be conceived under generall and uncertaine termes. The very Idea we forge unto their chastity is ridiculous. For, amongst the extreamest examples or patternes I have of it, it is *Fatua* the wife of *Faunas*, who after she was married, would never suffer her selfe to be seene of any man whatsoever. And *Hierons* wife, that never felt her husbands stincking breath, supposing it to be a qualitie perculiar and common to all men. It were necessary, that to satisfie and please us, they should become insensible and invisible. Now let us confesse, that the knot of the judgement of this duety consisteth principally in the will. There have beene husbands who have endured this accident, not onely without reproach and offense against their wives, but with singular acknowledgement, obligation and commendation to their vertue. Some one that more esteemed her honesty, then she loved her life hath prostituted the same unto the lawlesse lust, and raging sensuallity

of a mortall hatefull enemy, thereby to save her husbands life; and hath done that for him, which she could never have beene induced to doe for her selfe. This is no place to extend these examples: they are too high and over rich, to be presented in this luster: let us therefore reserve them for a nobler seate. But to give you some examples of a more vulgar stamp: Are there not women dayly seene amongst us, who for the onely profit of their husbands, and by their expresse order and brokage, make saile of their honesty? And in old times *Phaulius* the *Argian*, through ambition offred his to king *Philip*. Even as that *Galba*, who bestowed a supper on *Mecenas*, perceiving him and his wife beginne to bandy eie-tricks and signes, of civility shrunked downe upon his cushion, as one oppressed with sleepe; to give better skope unto their love; which he avouched as prettily: for at that instant, a servāt of his presuming to lay hands on the plate which was on the table, he cryde outright unto him; How now varlet? Seest thou not I sleepe onely for *Mecenas*? One may be of a loose behaviour, yet of purer will and better reformed, then another who frameth herselfe to a precise apparance. As some are seene complaine because they vowed chastity before yeares of discretion or knowledge: So have I seene others unfainedly bewaile and truly lament that they were vowed to licentiousnesse and dissolutnesse before the age of judgement and distinction. The parents lewdnesse may be the cause of it; or the force of impulsive necessity, which is a shrewd counsellor, and a violent perswader. Though chastity were in the East Indias of singular esteeme, yet the custome permitted, that a marryed wife might freely betake her selfe to what man soever did present her an Elephant: and that which some glory, to have beene valued at so high a rate. *Phedon* the Philosopher, of a noble house, after the taking of his country *Elides*, professed to prostitute the beauty of his youth to all commers, so long as it should continue, for money to live with and beare his charges. And *Solon* was the first of *Greece* (say some) who by his lawes, gave women liberty, by the price of their honesty, to provide for their necessities: A custome which *Herodotus* reporteth, to have beene entertayned before him in divers Common-wealthes. And moreover, what fruite yeeldes this carefull vexation? For, what justice soever be in this passion, yet should we note whither it harrye us unto our profit or no. Thinkes any man that he can ring them by his industrie?

*Pone seram, cohibe; sed quis custodiet ipsos
Custodes? cauta est, et ab illis incipit uxor.*

*Keepe her with locke and key, but from her who shall keepe
Her keepers? She beginnes with them, her wits so deepe.*

What advantage sufficeth them not, in this so skilfull age? *Curiosity* is every where vicious; but herein pernicious. It is meere folly for one to seeke to bee resolved of a doubt, or search into a mischief; for which there is no remedy, but makes it worse, but festereth the same: the reproach whereof is encreased, and chiefly published by jelousie: and the revenge whereof doeth more wound and disgrace our children, then it helpeth or graceth us. You waste away and die in pursuite of so concealed a misterie of so obscure a verification. Whereunto how pittiously have they arrived, who in my time, have attayned their purpose? If the accuser, or intelligencer present not withall the remedie and his assistance, his office is injurious, his intelligence harmefull, and which better deserveth a stabbe, then doth

a lye. Wee flowte him no lesse, that toyleth to prevent it, then laugh at him that is a Cuckolde and knowes it not. *The character of Cuckoldrie is perpetuall; on whome it once fastneth, it houldeth for ever.* The punishment bewrayeth it more then the faulte. It is a goodly fight, to drawe our private misfortunes from out the shadowe of oblivion or dungeon of doubt, for to blazon and proclaime them on Tragicall Stages: and misfortunes which pinche us not, but by relation. For, (as the saying is) shee is a good wife, and that a good marriage, not that is so indeede, but whereof no man speaketh. Wee ought to be wittilie-warie to avoyde this yrkesome, this tedious and unprofitable knowledge. The Romanes were accustomed, when they returned from any journey, to send home before, and give their wives notice of their comming, that so they might not surprize them. And therefore hath a certaine nation instituted the Priest to open the way unto the Bridegrome, on the wedding day, thereby to take from him the doubt and curiositie of searching in this first attempt, whether shee come a pure virgine to him, or be broken and tainted with any former love. But the worlde speakes of it. I know a hundred Cuckolds, which are so, honestlie and little undecently. An honest man and a gallant spirite, is moaned, but not disesteemed by it. Cause your vertue to suppress your mishap; that honest-minded men may blame the occasion, and curse the cause; that he which offends you, may tremble with onely thinking of it. And moreover, what man is scot-free, or who is not spoken-of in this sense, from the meanest unto the highest?

*tot qui legionibus imperitavit,
Et melior quàm tu multis fuit, improbe, rebus.*

*He that so many bandes of men commanded
Thy better much, sir knave, was much like branded.*

Seest thou not how many honest men, even in thy presence, are spoken-of and touched with this reproache? Imagine then they will bee as bould with thee, and saye as much of thee else-where. For no man is spared. And even Ladyes will scoffe and prattle of it. And what doe they now adayes more willingly flowteeee at, then at any well-composed and peaceable mariage? There is none of you all but hath made one Cuckolde or other: Now nature stode ever on this pointe, *Kae me Ile kae thee*, and ever readye to bee even, alwayes on recompences and vicissitude of things, and to give as good as one brings. The long-continued frequence of this accident, should by this time have seasoned the bitter taste thereof: It is almost become a custome; Oh miserable passion, which hath also this mischiefe, to be incommunicable.

Fors etiam nostris inuidit quæstibus aures.

*Fortune ev'n eares envyed,
To heare us when we cryed.*

For, to what freend dare you entrust your grievances, who, if he laugh not at them, will not make use of them, as a direction and instruction to take a share of the quarie or bootie to himselfe? As well the sowrenesse and inconveniences, as the sweetnesse and pleasures incident to marriage, are secretly concealed by the wiser sort. And amongst other importunate conditions belonging to wedlock, this one, unto a babbling fellow as I am,

is of the chiefest; that tyrannous custome makes it uncomely and hurtfull, for a man to communicate with any one all he knowes and thinkes of it. To give women advice to distaste them from jealousie, were but time lost or labour spent in vaine. Their essence is so infected with suspition, with vanitie and curiositie, that we may not hope to cure them by any lawfull meane. They often recover of this infirmitie by a forme of health, much more to be feared, then the disease it selfe. For even as some enchantment cannot ridde away an evill, but with laying it on another, so when they loose it, they transferre and bestowe this maladie on their husbands. And to saye trueth, I wotte not whether a man can endure any thing at their hands worse then jealousie: of all their conditions it is most dangerous, as the head of all their members. *Pittacus* sayde, that *every man had one imperfection or other: his wives curst pate was his*; and but for that, he should esteeme himselfe most happy. It must needs be a waighty inconvenience, wherewith so just, so wise and worthy a man, felt the state of his whole life distempered: what shall we pettie fellowes doe then? The Senate of *Marceille* had reason to grant and enroule his request, who demanded leave to kill himselfe, thereby to free and exempt himselfe from his wives tempestuous scoulding humor; for *it is an evill, that is never cleane rid away, but by remooving the whole peece*: and hath no other composition of worth, but flight or sufferance; both too-too hard, God knowes. And in my conceite, he understoode it right, that said, *a good marriage might be made betweene a blinde woman and a deafe man*. Let us also take heede, lest this great and violent strictnes of obligation we enjoyne them, produce not two effects contrary to our end: that is to wit, to set an edge upon their sutors stomackes, and make women more easie to yeeld. For, as concerning the first point, *enhancing the price of the place, we raise the price and endeare the desire of the conquest*. Might it not be *Venus* herselfe, who so cunningly enhanced the market of her ware, by the brokage or panderizing of the lawes? knowing how sottish and tastles a delight it is, were it enabled by opinion, and endeared by dearenes? to conclude, *it is all but hogges flesh, varied by sauce*, as said *Flaminius* his hoast. *Cupid* is a roguish God; his sporte is to wrestle with devotion and to contend with justice. It is his glory, that his power checketh and copes all other might, and that all other rules give place to his.

Materiam culpæ prosequiturque suæ.

*He prosecutes the ground,
Where he is faulty found.*

And as for the second point; should we not be lesse Cuckoldes if we lesse feared to be so? according to womens conditions: whom inhibition enciteth, and restraint enviteth.

Vbi uelis nolunt, ubi nolis uolunt ultro:

*They will not when you will,
When you will not, they will.*

Concessa pudet ire uia.

*They are asham'de to passe,
The way that granted was.*

What better interpretation can we finde concerning *Messalinas* demeanor? in the beginning she made her silly husband Cuckolde, secretly and by stealth (as the fashion is) but perceaving how uncontrouled and easily she went on with her matches, by reason of the stupiditie that possessed him, she presently contemned and forsooke that course; and beganne openly to make love, to avouch her servants, to entertaine and favour them in open view of all men; And would have him take notice of it, and seeme to bee distasted with it: But the sillie gull and senselesse cockes-combe awaked not for all this, and by his over-base facilitie, by which he seemed to aucthorize and legitimate hir humours, yeelding hir pleasures weerish, and hir amours tastelesse: what did shee? Being the wife of an Emperour, lustie, in health and living; and where? In *Rome*, on the worlds chiefe Theater, at highe noone-day, at a statelie feast, in a publike cerimonie; and which is more, with one *Silvius*, whome long time before she had freelie enjoyed, shee was solemnly married one day that hir husband was out of the cittie. Seemes it not that shee tooke a direct course to become chaste, by the wretchlesnesse of hir husband? or that shee sought another husband, who by jealousie might whette hir appetite, and who insisting might encite her? But the first difficultie she mette with, was also the last. The drowzie beast rouzed himselfe and suddainly started-up. *One hath often the worst bargaines at the hands of such sluggish logger-heads.* I have seene by experience, that this extreame patience or long sufferance, if it once come to be dissolved, produceth most bitter and outrageous revenges: for, taking fire all at once, choller and furie hudling altogether, becomming one confused chaos, clattereth forth their violent effects at the first charge.

Irarumque omnes effundit habenas.

*It quite lets loose the raine,
That anger should restraine.*

He caused both her and a great number of hir instruments and abettors to be put to death; yea such as could not doe withall, and whome by force of whipping she had allured to hir adulterous bed. What *Virgill* sayeth of *Venus* and *Vulcan*, *Lucretius* had more sutable sayde it of a secretly- stolne enjoying betweene hir and *Mars*.

*belli fera mœnena Mauors
Armipotens regit, in gremium qui sæpe tuum se
Reiicit, æterno deuinctus uulnere amoris:
Pascit amore auidos inhians in te Dea uisus,
Eque tuo pendet resupini spiritus ore:
Hunc tu Diua tuo recubantem corpore sancto
Circunfusa super, suaueis ex ore loquelas
Funde.*

*Mars mightie-arm'de, rules the fierce feates of armes,
Yet often casts himselfe into thine armes,
Oblig'de thereto by endlesse woundes of love,
Gaping on thee feedes griedie sight with love,
His breath hangs at thy mouth who upward lyes;
Goddesse thou circling him, while he so lyes,*

*With thy celestiall body, speeches sweete
Powre from thy mouth (as any Nectar sweet.)*

When I consider this, *reicit, pascit, inhians, molli, fouet, medullas, labefacta, pendet, percurrit*, and this noble *circunfusa*, mother of gentle *infusus*; I am vexed at these small points and verball allusions, which since have sprung up. To those well-meaning people, there needed no sharpe encounter or wittie equivocation: Their speach is altogether full and massie, with a naturall and constant vigor: They are all epigram; not onely tayle, but head, stomacke and feete. There is nothing forced, nothing wrested, nothing limping; all marcheth with like tenor. *Contextus totus uirilis est, non sunt circa flosculos occupati*. The whole composition or text is manlye, they are not Bee-busied about rhetorike flowres. This is not a soft quaint eloquence, and onely without offence, it is sinnowie, materiall, and solide; not so much delighting, as filling and ravishing, and ravisheth most the strongest wits, the wittiest conceits. When I behould these gallant formes of expressing, so lively, so nimble, so deepe: I say not this is to speake well, but to thinke well. It is the quaintnesse or liveness of the conceit, that elevateth and puffes up the wordes. *Pectus est quod disertum facit*. It is a mans owne brest, that makes him eloquent. Our people terme judgement, language; and full conceptions fine wordes. This pourtraiture is directed not so much by the hands dexteritie, as by having the object more lively printed in the minde. *Gallus* speakes plainely, because he conceiveth plainely. *Horace* is not pleased with a sleight or superficiall expressing, it would betraye him; he seeth more cleere and further into matters: his spirit pickes and ransacketh the whole store-house of words and figures, to shewe and present himselfe; and he must have them more then ordinarie, as his conceit is beyond ordinarie. *Plutarch* sayeth, that he discerned the Latine tongue by things. Here likewise the sense enlightneth and produceth the wordes: no longer windie or spungie, but of fleshe and bone. They signifie more then they utter. Even weake-ones shewe some image of this. For, in *Italie*, I spake what I listed in ordinarie discourses, but in more serious and pithie, I durst not have dared to trust to an Idiome, which I could not winde or turne beyond it's common grace, or vulgar byas. I will be able to adde and use in it somewhat of mine owne. The managing and emploiment of good wittes, endeareth and giveth grace unto a tongue: Notsomuch innovating as filling the same with more forcible and divers services, wresting, straining and enfoulding it. They bring no wordes unto it, but enrich their owne, waigh-downe and cram-in their signification and custome; teaching it unwonted motions; but wisely and ingeniouslie. Which skill how little it is given to all, may plainely be discerned by most of our moderne French Writers. They are over-bolde and scornefull, to shunne the common troden pathe: but want of invention and lacke of discretion looseth them. There is nothing to be seene in them but a miserable strained affectation of strange Inke-pot termes; harshe, colde and absurde disguisements, which in steade of raising, pull downe the matter. So they may gallantize and flush it in noveltie, they care not for efficacie. To take holde of a new farre-fetcht worde, they neglect the usuall, which often are more significant, forcible and sinnowie. I finde sufficient store of stufte in our language, but some defect of fashion. For there is nothing but could be framed of our hunters gibbrish wordes or strange phrases, and of our warriours peculiar termes; a fruitfull and ritch soyle to borrowe-of. And as *hearbes and trees are bettered and fortifide*

by being transplanted, so formes of speache are embellished and graced by variation. I finde it sufficiently plentious, but not sufficiently plyable and vigorous. It commonly faileth and shrinketh under a pithy and powerfull conception. If your march therein be farre extended, you often feele it droupe and languish under you, unto whose default the Latine doeth now and then present his helping hand, and the Greeke to some others. By some of these wordes which I have culled out, we more hardly perceive the *Energie* or effectuall opperation of them, forsomuch as use and frequence have in some sorte abased the grace and made their beauty vulgar. As in our ordinary language, we shall sometimes meete with excellent phrases, and quaint metaphors, whose blithnesse fadeth through age, and colour is tarnished by to common using them. But that doth nothing distaste those of sound judgement, nor derogate from the glory of those auncient authors, who, as it is likely were the first that brought these wordes into luster, and raised them to that straine. The Siences handle things over finely, with an artificiall manner, and different from the vulgar and naturall forme. My Page makes love, and understands it feelingly; Reade *Leon Hebreus* or *Ficinus* unto him; you speake of him, of his thoughtes and of his actions, yet understands he nothing what you meane. I nor acknowledge nor discern in *Aristotle*, the most part of my ordinary motions. They are cloathed with other roabes, and shrouded under other vestures, for the use of Academicall schooles. God send them well to speede: but were I of the trade, I would naturalize arte, as much as they artize nature. There let us leave *Benbo* and *Equicola*. When I write, I can well ommitte the company, and spare the remembrance of bookes; for feare they interrupt my forme. And in trueth good authors deject me too-toomuch, and quaille my courage. I willinglye imitate that painter, who having bunglerlike drawne, and fondly represented some Cockes, forbad his boyes to suffer any live-cocke to come into his shop. And to give my selfe some luster or grace have rather neede of some of *Antinonydes* the Musicions invention; who when he was to play any musicke, gave order that before or after him, some other bad musicions should cloy and surfet his auditory. But I can very hardely be without *Plutarke*; he is so universall and so full, that upon all occasions, and whatsoever extravagant subject you have undertaken, he intrudeth himselfe into your worke, and gently reacheth you a helpe-affording hand, fraught with rare embelishments, and inexhaustible of precious ritches. It spights me, that he is so much exposed unto the pillage of those which haunt him. He can no sooner come in my sight, or if I cast but a glance uppon him, but I pull some legge or wing from him. For this my dissignement, it much fitteth my purpose, that I write in mine owne house, in a wilde country, where no man helpeth or releeveth me; where I converse with no bodye that understandes the Latine of his *Paternoster*, and as little of French. I should no doubt have done it better else where, but then the worke had beene lesse myne: whose principall drift and perfection, is to be exactly myne, I could mend an accidentall error, whereof I abound in myne unwary course; but it were a kinde of treason to remoove the imperfections from me, which in me are ordinary and constant. When any bodie-els, or my selfe have saide unto my selfe: Thou art to full of figures or allegories; here is a word meerely-bred Gaskoyne; that's a dangerous phrase: (I refuse none that are used in the frequented streetes of *France*; those that will combat use and custome by the strict rules of Grammar do but jest) there's an ignorant discourse; that's a paradoxicall relation; or there's a foolish conceit: thou doest often

but dally: one will thinke thou speakest in earnest, what thou hast but spoken in jest. Yea (say I) but I correct unadvised, not costumarie errors. Speake I not so every where? Doe I not lively display my selfe? that sufficeth; I have my will; All the world my know me by my booke, and my booke by me: But I am of an Apish and imitating condition. When I meddled with making of verses (and I never made any but in Latine) they evidently accused the Poet I came last from reading: And of my first Essayes, some taste a little of the stranger. At *Paris* I speake some-what otherwise then at *Montaigne*. Whom I behold with attention, doth easily convey and imprint something of his in me. What I heedily consider, the same I usurpe: a foolish countenance, a crabbed looke, a ridiculous manner of speach. And vices more: Because they pricke me, they take fast holde upon me, and leave me not, unlesse I shake them off. I have more often beene heard to sweare by imitation, then by complexion. Oh injurious and dead-killing imitation: like that of those huge in greatnes and matchlesse in strength Apes, which *Alexander* met withall in a certaine part of *India*: which otherwise it had beene hard to vanquish. But by this their inclination to counterfet whatsoever they saw done, they afforded the meanes. For, thereby the hunters learn't in their sight to put-on shooes, and tie them with many strings and knots; to dresse their heads with dyvers strange attires, full of sliding knots; and dissemblingly to rub their eyes with glew, or bird-lime. So did those silly harmelesse beastes indiscretely employ their apish disposition. They ensnared, glewed, entrameled, haltred and shackled themselves. That other faculty of *extempore* and wittily representing the gestures and wordes of another, which often causeth sport and breedeth admyring, is no more in me then in a blocke. When I sweare after mine owne fashion, it is onely by God; the directest of all oathes. They report that *Socrates* swore by a Dogge; *Zeno* by that interjection (now a dayes used amongst the Italians) *Cappari*; and *Pithagoras* by water and by ayre. I am so apt at unawares to entertaine these superficial impressions, that if but for three dayes togeather I use my selfe to speake to any Prince with your Grace or your Highnesse, for eight dayes after I so forget my selfe, that I shall still use them for your Honour or your Worship: and what I am wont to speake in sport or jest the next day after I shall speake in good serious earnest. Therefore in writing I assume more unwillingly much frequent arguments, for feare I handle them at others charges. All argumentes are alike fertile to me. I take them uppon any trifle. And I pray God this were not undertaken by the commaundement of a minde as fleeting. Let me beginne with that likes me best for all matters are linked one to another. But my conceite displeaseth me, for somuch as it commonly produceth most foolish dotages from deepest studies; and such as content me on a suddaine, and when I least looke for them; which as fast fleete away, wanting at that instant some holde fast. On horsebacke, at the table, in my bed; but most on horsebacke, where my amplest meditations and my farthest reaching conceites are. My speach is somewhat nicely jealous of attention and silence; if I be in any earnest talke, who interrupteth me, cuts me off. In travell, even the necessitye of wayes breakes-off discourses. Besides that I most commonly travell without company, which is a great helpe for continued reasonings; whereby I have sufficient leasure to entertaine my selfe. I thereby have that successe I have in dreames; In dreaming I commend them to my memory (for what I dreame I doe it willingly) but the next morning, I can well call to minde what colour they were of, whether blyth, sad, or

strange; but whatin substance, the more I labour to finde out, the more I overwhelme them in oblivion. So of casual and unpremeditated conceites that come into my braine, nought but a vaine image of them remaineth in my memory; so much onely, as sufficeth unprofitably to make me chafe, spight and fret in pursuite of them. Well then, leaving bookes aside, and speaking more materially and simply; when all is done, I finde that *love is nothing els but an insatiate thirst of enjoying a greedily desired subject*. Nor Venus that good huswife, other, then a tickling delight of emptying ones semenary vessels: as is the pleasure which nature giveth us to discharge other partes: which becōmeth faulty by immoderation, and defective by indiscretion. To *Socrates*, *love is an appetite of generation by the intermission of beauty*. Now considering oftentimes the ridiculous tickling, or titilation of this pleasure, the absurd, giddie and harebrained motions wherewith it tosseth *Zeno*, and agitates *Cratippus*; that unadvised rage, that furious and with cruelty enflamed visage in loves lustfull and sweetest effects: and then a grave, sterne, severe surly countenance in so fond-fond an action, that one hath pell-mell lodged our joyes and filthes together: and that the supremest voluptuousnesse both ravisheth and plaineth, as doth sorrow: I beleieve that which *Plato* sayes to be true, that *man was made by the Gods for them to toy and play withall*.

Sæuitia?

*quaenam ista iocandi?*²

What cruelty is this, so set on jesting is?

And that nature in mockery left us the most troublesome of our actions, the most common thereby to equal us, and without distinction to set the foolish and the wise, us and beasts, all in one ranke: no barrell better hearing. When I imagine the most contemplative and discreetly-wise men in these termes in that humour, I hold him for a cozoner, for a cheater to seeme either studiously contemplative, or discreetly wise. *It is the foulennesse of the Peacocks feete, which doth abate his pride, and stoope his gloating-eyed tayle;*

ridentem dicere uerum,

Quid uetat?

What should forbid thee sooth to say, yet be as mery as we may.

Those which in playes refuse serious opinions, doe as one reporteth, like unto him, who dreadeth to adore the image of a Saint, if it want a cover, an aprone or a tabernacle. We feede full well, and drinke like beastes; but they are not actions that hinder the offices of our minde. In those we hold good our advantage over them; whereas this brings each other thought under subjection, and by it's imperious authority make brutish and dulleth all *Platoes* philosophie and divinity; and yet he complains not of it. In all other things you may observe decorum, and maintaine some decencie: all other operations admit some rules of honesty: this cannot onely be imagined, but vicious or ridiculous. See whether for example sake, you can but find a wise or discrete proceeding in it. *Alexander* said, that he knew himselfe mortall chiefly by this action, and by sleeping: sleepe doth stifle, and suppresseth the faculties of our soule; and that,

both devoureth and dissipates them. Surely it is an argument not onely of our originall corruption, but a badge of our vanity and deformity. On the one side nature urgeth us unto it; having thereunto combined, yea fastned, the most noble, the most profitable, and the most sensually-pleasing, of all her functions; and on the other suffereth us to accuse, to condemne and to shunne it, as insolent, as dishonest and as lewde, to blush at it, and allow, yea and to commend abstinence. *Are not we most brutish, to terme that worke beastly which begets, and which maketh us?* Most people have concurred in divers cerimonies of religion, as sacrifices, luminaries, fastings, incensings, offrings; and amongst others, in condemning of this action. All opinions agree in that, besides the so farre-extended use of circumcision. We have peradventure reason to blame our selves, for making so foolish a production as man, and to entitle both the deed and parts thereto belonging, shamful (mine are properly so at this instant). The *Esseniens*, of whom *Plinie* speaketh, maintained themselves a long time without nurces, or swathing-clothes, by the arrivall of strangers that came to their shoares, who seconding their fond humor, did often visite them. A whole nation hazarding rather to consume, then engage themselves to feminine embracements, and rather loose the succession of all men, then forge one. They report that *Zeno* never dealt with woman but once in all his life; which he did for civilitie, least he should over-obstinately seeme to contemne the sex. *Each one avoideth to see a man borne, but all runne hastily to see him dye.* To destroy him we seeke a spacious field and a full light; but to construct him, we hide our selves in some darke corner, and worke as close as we may. It is our dutie to conceale our selves in making him; it is our glory, and the originall of many vertues to destroy him, being framed. The one is a manifest injurie, the other a greater favor; for *Aristotle* saith, that in a certaine phrase where he was borne, to bonifie or benifit, was as much to say as to kill one. The Athenians, to equall the disgrace of these two actions being to cleanse the Ile of *Delos*, and justifie themselves unto *Apollo*, forbad within that precinct all burials and births. *Nostri nosmet pœnitent*, *We are weary of our selves.* There are some nations, that when they are eating, they cover themselves. I know a Lady (yea one of the greatest) who is of opinion that to chew is an unseemly thing, which much empaieth their grace and beauty: and therefore by hir will she never comes abroad with an appetite. And a man that cannot endure one should see him eate; and shunneth all company more when he filleth, then when he emptieth himselfe. In the Turkish Empire there are many, who to excell the rest, will not be seene when they are feeding, and who make but one meale in a weeke: who mangle their face and cut their limmes; and who never speake to any body; who thinke to honour their nature, by disnaturing themselves: oh fanaticall people, that prize themselves by their contempt, and mend their empairing. What monstrous beast is this, that makes himselfe a horror to himselfe, whome his delightes displease, who tyes himselfe unto misfortune? some there are that conceale their life,

Exilióque domos et dulcia limina mutant,

*They change for banishment,
The places that might best content.*

and steale it from the sight of other men: That eschew health, and shunne mirth as hatefull qualities and harmefull. Not onely divers Sects, but many people curse their birthe and blesse their death. Some there be that abhorre the glorious Sunne, and adore the hiddious darkenesse. We are not ingenious but to our owne vexation: It is the true foode of our spirits force: a dangerous and most unruly implement.

O miseri quorum gaudia crimen habent.

O miserable they, whose joyes in fault we lay.

Alas poore silly man, thou hast but too-too many necessary and unavoidable incommodities, without increasing them by thine owne invention, and are sufficiently wretched of condition without any arte: thou aboundest in realle and essentiall deformities, and needest not forge any by imagination. Doest thou finde thy selfe to wel at ease, unlesse the moity of thine ease molest thee? Findest thou to have supplied or discharged all necessary offices, whereto nature engageth thee, and that she is idle in thee, if thou binde not thy selfe unto new offices? Thou fearest not to offend hir universall and undoubted lawes, and art mooved at thine owne partiall and fantasticall ones. And by how much more particuler, uncertaine, and contradicted they are, the more endeavours thou bestowest that way. The positive orders of thy parish tie thee, those of the world do nothing concerne thee. Runne but a little over the examples of this consideration; thy life is full of them. The verses of these two Poets, handling laciviousnes so sparingly and so discretly, as they do, in my conceite seeme to discover, and display it nearer; ladies cover their bosome with networke; priests many sacred things with a vaile, and painters shadow their workes, to give them the more luster, and to adde more grace unto them. And they say that the streakes of the Sunne, and force of the winde, are much more violent by reflection, then by a direct line. The Egyptian answered him wisely, that asked him, what he had hidden under his cloake? it is (quoth he) *hidden under my cloake, that thou maiest not know what it is*. But there are certaine other things which men conceale to show them. Here this fellow more open.

Et nudam pressi corpus adusque meum.

*My body I applide,
Even to her naked side.*

Me thinkes he baffles me. Let *Martiall* at his pleasure tuck-up *Venus*, he makes her not by much appeare so wholly. *He that speakes all he knows, doth cloy and distaste us*. Who feareth to expresse himselfe, leadeth our conceite to imagine more then happily he conceiveth. There is treason in this kinde of modesty: and chiefly as these do, in opening us so faire a path unto imagination: Both the action and description should taste of purloyning. The love of the Spaniards, and of the Italians pleaseth me; by how much more respectie and fearefull it is, the more nicely close and closely nice it is, I wot not who in ancient time wished his throat were as long as a Cranes neck, that so he might the longer and more leasurely taste what he swallowed. That wish were more to purpose then this suddaine and violent pleasure: Namely in such natures as mine, who am faulty in suddainenenes. To stay her fleeting, and delay her with preambles;

with them all serveth for favour, all is construed to be a recompence, a winke, a cast of the eye, a bowing, a word, or a signe, a beck is as good as a Dew guard. *He that could dine with the smoake of roste-meate, might he not live at a cheape rate? would he not soone be ritche?* It is a passion that commixeth with smale store of solide essence, great quantitie of doating vanity, and febricitant raving: it must therefore be requited and served with the like. Let us teach Ladies, to know how to prevaile; highly to esteeme themselves; to amuse, to circumvent and cozen us. We make our last charge the first: we show our selves right French men: ever rash, ever headlong, wiredrawing their favours, and enstalling them by retaile: each one, even unto miserable olde-age, findes some listes end, according to his worth and merite. He who hath no jouissance but in enjoying; who shootes not but to hit the marke; who loves not hüting but for the pray; it belongs not to him to entermedle with our schoole. *The more steps and degrees there are: the more delight and honour is there on the top.* We should be pleased to be brought unto it, as unto stately pallaces, by divers porches severall passages, long and pleasant galleries, and well contrived turnings. This dispensation would in the end, redound to our benefit; we should stay on it, and longer love to lye at rack and manger: for these snatches and away, mar the grace of it. Take away hope and desire, we grow faint in our courses, we come but lagging after: Our maistry and absolute possession, is infinitely to be feared of them: After they have wholly yeelded themselves to the mercy of our faith and constancie, they have hazarded something: They are rare and difficult vertues: so soone as they are ours, we are no longer theirs.

*postquam cupidæ mentis satiata libido est.
Uerba nihil metuere, nihil periuria curant.*

*The lust of greedie minde once satisfied,
They feare no words, nor reke othes falsified,*

And *Thrasonides* a young Grecian, was so religiously amorous of his love, that having after much sute gained his mistris hart and favour, he refused to enjoy hir, least by that jouissance he might or quench, or satisfie, or languish that burning flame and restlesse heate, wherewith he gloryed, and so pleasingly fed himselfe. *Things farre fetcht and dearly bought are good for Ladyes. It is the deare price makes viands savour the better.* See but how the forme of salutations, which is peculiar unto our nation, doth by it's facilitie bastardize the grace of kisses, which *Socrates* saith, to be of that consequence, waight and danger, to ravish and steale our hearts. It is an unpleasing and injurious custome unto Ladies, that they must afforde their lips to any man that hath but three Lackies following him, how unhandsome and lothsome soever he be;

*Cuius liuida naribus caninis,
Dependet glacies, rigétque barba:
Centùm occurrere malo culilingis.*

*From whose dog-nosthrils black-blew Ise depends,
Whose beard frost-hardned stands on bristled ends, &c.*

Nor do we our selves gaine much by it: for as the world is devided into foure partes, so for foure faire ones, we must kisse fistie foule: and to a

nice or tender stomacke, as are those of mine age, one ill kisse doth surpay one good. In *Italy* they are passionate and languishing sutors to very common and mercenarie women; and thus they defend and excuse themselves, saying; *That even in enjoying there be certaine degrees*; and that by humble services, they will endeavour to obtaine that, which is the most absolutely perfect. *They sell but their bodyes, their willes cannot be put to sale*; that is too free, and too much it's owne. So say these, that it is the will they attempt, and they have reason: It is the will one must serve and most sollicite. I abhorre to imagine mine, a body voide of affection. And me seemeth, this frenzie hath some affinitie with that boyes fond humor, who for pure love would needs wantonize with that fayre Image of *Venus*, which *Praxiteles* had made: or of that furious Egyptian, who lusted after a dead womans corpes which he was enbaulming and stitching up: which was the occasion of the lawe that afterwarde was made in *Egypt*: that the bodies of faire, young and nobly borne women, should be kept three dayes, before they should be delivered into the hands of those who had the charge to provide for their funeralles and burials. *Periander* did more miraculously: who extended his conjugall affection (more regular and lawfull) unto the enjoying of *Melissa* his deceased wife. Seemes it not to be a lunatique humor in the Moone, being otherwise unable to enjoy *Endimion* hir favorite darling, to lull him in a sweet slumber for many moneths together; and feed hirselle with the jouissance of a boye, that stirred not but in a dreame? I say likewise, that *a man loveth a body without a soule, when he loveth a body without his consent and desire*. All enjoyings are not alike. There are some ethicke, fainte and languishing ones. A thousand causes, besides affection and good-will, may obtaine us this graunt of women. It is no sufficient testimonie of true affection: therein may lurke treason, as else-where: they sometime goe but faintlie to worke, and as they say with one buttock;

Tanquam thura merúmque parent;

*As though they did dispense,
Pure Wine and Frankincense.*

Absentem marmoreámue putes.

*Of Marble you would thinke she were,
Or that she were not present there.*

I knowe some, that would rather lend that, then their Coache; and who imparte not themselves, but that waye: you must also marke whether your company pleaseth them for some other respect, or for that end onely, as of a lustie-strong grome of a Stable: as also in what ranke, and at what rate you are there lodged or valued;

*tibi si datur uni
Quo lapide illa diem candidiore notet.*

*If it afforded be to thee alone,
Whereby she counts that day of all dayes one.*

What if she eate your bread, with the sauce of a more pleasing imagination?

Te tenet, absentes alios suspirat amores.

*Thee she retaines, yet sigheth she
For other loves that absent be.*

What? have we not seene some in our dayes, to have made use of this action, for the execution of a most horrible revenge, by that meanes murthering and empoysoning (as one did) a very honest woman? such as know *Italie* will never wonder, if for this subject, I seeke for no examples else-where. For the said nation may in that point be termed Regent of the world. They have commonly more faire women, and fewer foule then we, but in rare and excellent beauties I thinke we match them. The like I judge of their wits; of the vulgar sort they have evidently many more. Blockishnes is without all comparison more rare amongst them: but for singular wits, and of the highest pitch, we are no whit behinde them. Were I to extend this comparison, I might (me thinkes) say, touching valor, that on the other-side, it is in regarde of them, popular and naturall amongst us: but in their hands one may sometimes finde it so compleate and vigorous, that it exceedeth all the most forcible examples we have of it. The mariages of that countrie are in this somewhat defective. Their custome doth generally impose so severe observances, and slavish lawes upon wives, that the remotest acquaintance with a stranger, is amongst them as capitall as the nearest. Which law causeth, that all approaches proove necessarilie substanciall: and seeing all commeth to one reckoning with them, they have an easie choise: and have they broken downe their hedges? Beleeve it, they will have fire: *Luxuria ipsis uinculis, sicut fera bestia, irritata, deinde emissas: Luxurie is like a wilde beast, first made fiercer with tying, and then let loose.* They must have the reynes given them a little.

*Uidi ego nuper equum contra sua frena tenacem
Ore reluctanti fulminis ire modo.*

*I saw, spite of his bit, a resty colt
Runne head-strong headlong like a thunder-bolt.*

One alayeth the desire of company, by giving it some libertie. It is a commendable custome with our nation, that our children are entertained in noble houses, there as in a schoole of nobilitie to be trained and brought up as Pages. And t'is said to be a kinde of discourtesie, to refuse it a gentleman. I have observed (for, *so many houses so many severall formes and orders*) that such Ladies as have gone about to give their waiting women, the most austere rules, have not had the best successe. There is required more then ordinary moderation: a great part of their government must be left to the conduct of their discretion: For, when all comes to all, no discipline can bridle them in each point. True it is, that she who escapeth safe and unpolluted from out the schoole of freedome giveth more confidence of hirselfe, then she who commeth sound out of the schoole of severitie and restraint. Our forefathers framed their daughters countenances unto shamfastnesse and feare, (their inclinations and desires alwaies alike) we unto assurance. We understand not the matter. That belongeth to the Sarmatian wenches, who by their lawes may lye with no man, except with their owne hands they have before killed another man in warre. To me that have no right but by the eares, it sufficeth, if they retaine me to be of their counsell,

following the priviledge of mine age. I then advise both them and us to embrace abstinence, but if this season bee too much against it, at least modestie and discretion. For, as *Aristippus* (speaking to some young men who blushed to see him go into a bawdy house) said, *the fault was not in entring, but in not cōming out againe*, She that will not exempt hir conscience, let hir exempt hir name: though the substance be not of worth, yet let the apparance hould still good. I love gradation and prolonging, in the distribution of their favours. *Plato* sheweth, that in all kinds of love, facilitie and readinesse is forbidden to deffendants. Tis a trick of greedinesse, which it behoveth them to cloake with their arte, so rashly and fond-hardily to yeeld themselves in grosse. In their distributions of favours, holding a regular and moderate course, they much better deceive our desires, and conceale theirs. Let them ever be flying before us: I meane even those that intend to be overtaken. As the Scythians are wont, though they seeme to runne away, they beate us more, and sooner put us to route. Verily, according to the lawe which nature giveth them, it is not fit for them to will and desire: their part is to beare, to obay and to consent. Therefore hath nature bestowed a perpetuall capacitie; on us a seld and uncertaine abilitie. They have alwayes their houre, that they may ever be ready to let us enter. And whereas she hath willed our appetites should make apparant showe and declaration, she caused theirs to be concealed and inward: and hath furnished them with parts unfit for ostentation; and onely for defence. Such pranks as this, we must leave to the Amazonian libertie. *Alexander* the great marching through *Hircania*, *Thalestris* Queene of the Amazones came to meet him with three hundred lances of her sex, all well mounted and compleatlie armed; having left the residue of a great armie, that followed hir, beyond the neighbouring mountaines. And thus aloud, that all might heare she bespake him; That the farre-resounding fame of his victories, and matchlesse valour, had brought hir thither to see him, and to offer him hir meanes and forces, for the advancing and furthering of his enterprises. And finding him so faire, so young and strong, she, who was perfectly accomplished in all his qualities, advised him to lye with hir, that so there might be borne of the most valiant woman in the world, and onely valiant man then living, some great and rare creature for posteritie. *Alexander* thanked hir for the rest; but to take leasure for hir last demands accomplishment, he staide thirteene dayes in that place, during which, he revelled with as much glee, and feasted with as great jollitie as possibly could be devised, in honour and favour of so couragious a Princes. We are wel-nigh in all things parciall and corrupted Judges of their actions, as no doubt they are of ours. I allowe of truth as well when it hurts me, as when it helpes me. It is a foule disorder, that so often urgeth them unto change, and hinders them from setling their affection on any one subject: as we see in this Goddessse, to whom they impute so many changes and severall friends. But withall, *it is against the nature of love, not to be violent, and against the condition of violence, to be constant*. And those who wonder at it, exclaime against it, and in women search for the causes of this infirmitie, as incredible and unnaturall: why see they not how often, without any amazement and exclaiming, themselves are possessed and infected with it? I might happily seeme more strange to finde any constant stay in them. It is not a passion meereley corporeall. *If no end be found in coveteousnesse, nor limit in ambition, assure your selfe there is nor end nor limit in letchery*, It yet continueth after satiety: nor can any man prescribe it or end or constant satisfaction: it

ever goeth on beyond it's possession, beyond it's boundes. And if constancie be peradventure in some sorte more pardonable in them then in us: They may readily alleadge against us, our ready inclination unto daylie variety and new ware: And secondly alleage without us, that they buy a pigge in a poake. *Jone* Queene of *Naples* caused *Andreofse* her first husband to be strangled and hang'd out of the barres of his window, with a corde of Silke and golde, woven with her owne handes; because in bed-businesse she found neither his members nor endeavours, answerable the hope she had conceived of him, by viewing his stature, beauty, youth, and disposition, by which she had formerly beene surprised and abused. That action hath in it more violence then passion: so that on their part at least necessitie is ever provided-for: on our behalfe it may happen otherwise. Therefore *Plato* by his lawes did very wisely establish, that before mariages, the better to decide it's opportunitie, competent Judges might be appointed to take view of young men which pretended the same, all naked: and of maidens but to the waste: In making triall of us, they happilie finde us not worthy their choise:

Experta latus madidoque simillima loro
Inguina, nec lassâ stare coacta manu.
Deserit imbelles thalamos.

It is not sufficient, that will keepe a levell course: weakenesse and incapacitie may lawfullie breake wedlock;

Et querendum aliunde foret neruosius illud
Quod posset Zonam soluere uirgineam.

Why not, and according to measure, an amorous intelligence, more licencious and more active?

Si blando nequeat superesse labori.

If it cannot out last, labor with pleasure past.

But is it not great impudencie, to bring our imperfections and weakenesse, in place where we desire to please, and leave a good report and cōmendation behind us? for the little I now stand in need of.

ad unum
Mollis opus.

Unable to hold out, one only busie bout,

I would not importune any one, whom I am to reverence and feare.

fuge suspicari,
Cuius undenum trepidauit ætas
Claudere lustrum.

Him of suspicion cleare,
Whom age hath brought well neare
To five and fiftie yeare.

Nature should have beene pleased to have made this age miserable, without making it also ridiculous. I hate to see one for an inche of wretched vigor, which enflames him but thrice a weeke, take-on and swagger as fiercely, as if he had some great and lawfull dayes-worke in his belly: a right blast or puffe of winde: And admire his itching, so quick and nimble, all in a moment to be lubberly squat and benumbed. This appetite should onely belong to the blossom of a prime youth. Trust not unto it, though you see it second that indefatigable, full, constant and swelling heate, that is in you: for trulye it will leave you at the best, and when you shall most stand in neede of it. Send it rather to some tender, irresolute and ignorant guirle, which yet trembleth for feare of the rod, and that will blush at it,

*Indum sanguineo ueluti uiolauerit ostro,
Si quis ebur, uel mista rubent ubi lilia, multa
Albarosa.*

*As if the Indian Yvorie one should taint
With bloudie Scarlet-graine, or Lillies paint,
White entermixt with red, with Roses over-spred.*

Who can stay untill the next morrow, and not dye for shame, the disdaine of those love-sparkling eyes, privie to his faintnesse, dastardise and impertinencie;

Et taciti fecere tamen conuitia uultus.

The face though silent, yet silent upbrayde-it.

he never felt the sweet contentment, and the sence-mooving earnestnes, to have beaten and tarnished them by the vigorous exercise of an officious and active night. When I have perceived any of them weary of me, I have not presently accused her lightnes: but made question whether I had not more reason to quarrell with nature, for handling me so unlawfully and uncivilly,

*Si non longa satis, si non benè mentula crassa:
Nimirum sapiunt uidentque paruam
Matronæ quoque mentulam illibenter.*

and to my exceeding hurt. Each of my pieces are equally mine, one as another: and no other doth more properly make me a man then this. My whole pourtraiture I universally owe unto the world. The wisdom and reach of my lesson, is all in truth, in libertie, in essence: Disdaining in the catholique of my true duties, these easie, saint, ordinary and provincially rules. All naturall, constant and generall; whereof civilitie and cerimonie, are daughters, but bastards. We shall easily have the vices of apparance, when we shall have had those of essence. When we have done with these, we run upon others, if we finde need of running. For there is danger, that we devise new offices, to excuse our negligence toward naturall offices, and to confound thē. That it is so, we see that in places where faults are crimes, crimes are but faults. That among nation, where lawes of seemlinesse are more rare and slack, the primitive lawes of common reason are better observed: The innumerable multitude of so manifold

duties stifling, languishing and dispersing our care. The applying of our selves unto sleight matters, with-draweth us from such as be just. Oh how easie and plausible a course do these superficial men undertake, in respect of ours. These are but shadows under which we shroud, and wherewith we pay one another. But we pay not, but rather heape debt on debt, unto that great and dreadfull judge, who tucks up our clouts and rags from about our privie parts, and is not squeamish to view all-over, even to our most inward and secret deformities: a beneficiall decencie of our maidenly bashfulnesse, could it debar him of this tainted discovery. To conclude, he that could recover or un-besot man, from so scrupulous and verball a superstition, should not much prejudice the world. *Our life consisteth partly in folly, and partly in wisdom.* He that writes of it but reverently and regularly, omits the better moytie of it. I excuse me not unto my selfe, and if I did, I would rather excuse my excuses, then any fault else of mine: I excuse my selfe of certaine humors, which in number I hold stronger, then those which are on my side: In consideration of which I will say thus much more (for I desire to please all men; though it be a hard matter, *Esse unum hominem accommodatum ad tantam morum, ac sermonum et uoluntatum uarietatem*, *That one man should be applyable to so great varietie of manners, speeches and dispositions*) that they are not to blame me, for what I cause auctorities received and approved of many ages, to utter: and that it is not reason, they should for want of ryme denie me the dispensation, which ever some of our churchmen usurpe and enjoy in this season; whereof beholde here two, and of the most pert and cocket amongst them:

Rimula, dispeream, ni monogramma tua est.

Un vit d'amy la contente et bien traitte.

How many others more? I love modestie; nor is it from judgement that I have made choise of this kinde of scandalous speach; t'is nature hath chosen the same for me: I commend it no more, then all formes contrary unto received custome: onely I excuse it; and by circumstances aswell generall as particular, would qualifie the imputation. Well, let us proceede. Whence commeth also the usurpation of souveraine auctoritie, which you assume unto your selves, over those that favour you to their cost and prejudice,

Si furtiua dedit nigra munuscula nocte,

*If she have giv'n by night,
The stolne gift of delight.*

that you should immediatly invest withall the interest, the coldnes, and a wedlock auctority? It is a free bargaine, why doe you not undertake it on those termes you would have them to keepe? *There is no prescription upon voluntarie things.* It is against forme, yet it is true, that I have in my time managed this match (so farre as the nature of it would allow) with as much conscience as any other whatsoever, and not without some colour of justice: and have given them no further testimony of mine affection, then I sincerelie felt: and have lively displaide unto them the declination, vigor and birth of the same; with the fits and deferring of it: *A man cannot alwayes keepe an even pace*, nor ever go to it alike. I have bin so sparing to

promise, that (as I thinke) I have paide more then either I promised or was due. They have found me faithfull, even to the service of their inconstancie: I say an inconstancie avowed, and somtimes multiplide. I never broke with them, as long as I had any hold, were it but by a threds-end: and whatsoever occasion they have given me by their ficklenes, I never fel-of unto contempt and hatred: for such familiarities, though I attaine them on most shameful conditions, yet do they binde me unto some constant good-will. I have sometimes given them a taste of choller and indiscreet impacience, upon occasions of their wyles, sleights, close-conveyances, controversies and contestations betweene us; for, by complexion, I am subject to hastie and rash motions, which often impeach my traffike, and marre my bargaines, though but meane and of small worth. Have they desired to essay the libertie of my judgement, I never dissembled to give them fatherly counsell and biting advise, and shewed my selfe ready to scrath them where they itched. If I have given them cause to complaine of me, it hath bin most for finding a love in me, in respect of our moderne fashion, foolishly conscientious. I have religiously kept my word, in things that I might easily have bin dispensed with. They then yeelded somtimes with reputation, and under conditions, which they would easily suffer to be infringed by the conqueror. I have more then once, made pleasure in hir greatest efforts strike saile unto the interest of their honor: and where reason urged me, armed them against me, so that they guided themselves more safely and severly by my prescriptions, if they once freely yeelded unto them, then they could have done by their owne. I have as much as I could endeavored to take on my selfe the charge and hazard of our appointments, thereby to discharge them from all imputation; and ever contrived our meetings in most hard, strange and unsuspected manner, to be the lesse mistrusted, and (in my seeming) the more accessible. They are opened, especially in those parts, where they suppose themselves most concealed. *Things least feared, are least defended and observed.* You may more securely dare, what no man thinks you would dare, which by difficultie becometh easie. Never had man his approaches more impertinentlie genitale. This way to love, is more according to discipline. But how ridiculous unto our people, and of how small effect, who better knowes then I? yet will I not repent me of it; I have no more to loose by the matter,

*me tabula sacer
Uotiua paries, indicat uuida,
Suspendisse potenti
Uestimenta maris Deo.*

*By tables of the vowes which I did owe
Fastned thereto the sacred wall doth shoue;
I have hung-up my garments water-wet,
Unto that God whose powre on seas is great.*

It is now high time to speake plainely of it. But even as to another, I would perhaps say; My friend thou dotest, the love of thy times hath small affinitie with faith and honestie;

*hæc si tu postules
Ratione certa facere, nihilo plus agas,
Quàm si des operam, ut cum ratione insanias.*

*If this you would by reason certaine make,
You doe no more, then if the paines you take,
To be starke-mad, and yet to thinke it reason fit.*

And yet if I were to beginne anew, it should be by the very same path and progresse, how fruitlesse soever it might proove unto me. *Insufficiencie and sottishnesse are commendable in a discommendable action.* As much as I seperate my selfe from their humour in that, so much I approach unto mine owne. Moreover, I did never suffer my selfe to be wholly given over to that sport; I therewith pleased, but forgot not my selfe. I ever kept that little understanding and discretion, which nature hath bestowed on me, for their service and mine; some motion towards it, but no dotage. My conscience also was engaged therein, even unto incontinencie and excesse, but never unto ingratitude, treason, malice or cruelty. I bought not the pleasure of this vice at all rates; and was content with it's owne and simple cost. *Nullum intra se uitium est, There is no vice contained in it selfe.* I hate almost alike a crouching and dull lasinesse, and a toilesome and thornie working. The one pincheth, the other dulleth me. I love wounds as much as bruises, and blood wipes as well as dry-blowes. I had in the practise of this solace, when I was fitter for it, an even moderation betweene these two extremities. *Love is a vigilant, lively and blithe agitation:* I was neither troubled nor tormented with it, but heated and distempred by it: There we must make a stay; It is onely hurtfull unto fooles. A yong man demanded of the Philosopher *Panetius*, whether it would besee me a wise man to be in love; *Let wisemen alone* (quoth he) *but for thee and me that are not so, it were best not to engage our selves into so stirring and violent a humor, which makes us slaves to others and contemptible unto our selves.* He said true, for we ought not entrust a matter so dangerous, unto a minde that hath not wherewith to sustaine the approaches of it, nor effectually to quaille the speach of *Agesilaus*; *That wisdom and love cannot live together:* It is a vaine occupation (t'is true) unseemlie, shamefull and lawlesse: But using it in this manner, I esteeme it wholesome and fit to rouze a dull spirit and a heaue body: and, as a phisition experienced, I would prescribe the same unto a man of my complexion and forme, as soone as any other receipt, to keepe him awake and in strength, when he is well in yeares; and delaye him from the gripings of olde age. As long as we are but in the suburbes of it, and that our pulse yet beateth,

*Dum noua canities, dum prima et recta senectus,
Dum superest Lachesi quod torqueat, et pedibus me
Porto meis, nullo dextram subeunte bacillo.*

*While hoarie haies are new, and ould-age fresh and straight,
While Lachesis hath yet to spin, while I my waight
Beare on my feeete, and stand, without staffe in my hand.*

We had neede to be sollicit and tickled, by some biting agitation, as this is. See but what youth, vigour and jollitie it restored unto wise *Anacreon*. And *Socrates*, when he was elder then I am, speaking of an amorous object: leaning (sayes hee) shoulder to shoulder, and approaching my head unto his, as we were both together looking upon a booke, I felt, in truth, a suddaine tingling or prickling in my shoulder, like the biting of some beast, which more then five dayes after tickled me, whereby a continuall itching glided into my heart. But a casuall touche,

and that but in a shoulder, to enflame, to distemper and to distract a minde, enfeebled, tamed and cooled through age; and of all humaine mindes the most reformed. And why not I pray you? *Socrates* was but a man, and would neither be nor seeme to be other. Philosophie contends not against naturall delights, so that due measure be joined therewith; and alloweth the moderation, not the shunning of them. The efforts of her resistance are employed against strange and bastard or lawlesse ones. She saith, that *the bodyes appetites ought not to be encreased by the minde*. And wittily adviseth us, that we should not excite our hunger by sacietie; not to stuffe, in steed of filling our bellies: to avoide all jouissance that may bring us to want: and shunne all meate and drinke, which may make us hungrie or thirstie. As in the service of love, she appoints us to take an object, that onely may satisfie the bodyes neede, without once mooving the minde: which is not there to have any doing, but onely to follow and simply to assist the body. But have I not reason to thinke, that these precepts, which (in mine opinion are elsewhere somewhat rigorous) have reference unto a body which doth his office; and that a dejected one, as a weakned stomach may be excused if he cherish and sustaine the same by arte, and by the entercouse of fantzie, to restore it the desires, the delights and blithnesse, which of it selfe it hath lost? May we not say, that there is nothing in us, during this earthly prison, simply corporall, or purely spirituall? and that injuriously we dismember a living man? that there is reason we should carrie our selves in the use of pleasure, at least as favourablie as we doe in the pangs of griefe? For example, it was vehement, even unto perfection, in the soules of Saints, by repentance. The body had naturally a part therein, by the right of their combination, and yet might have but little share in the cause: and were not contented that it should simply follow and assist the afflicted soule: they have tormented the body it selfe with convenient and sharpe punishments; to the end that one with the other, the body and the soule might avie plunge man into sorow; so much the more saving, by how much the more smarting. In like case, in corporall pleasures, is it not injustice to quaille and coole the minde and, say, it must thereunto be entrained, as unto a forced bond, or servile necessitie? she should rather hatch and cherish them, and offer and envite it selfe unto them; the charge of swaying rightly belonging to hir. Even as in my conceit, it is her part, in hir proper delights, to inspire and infuse into the body all sense or feeling which his condition may beare, and indeavour that they may be both sweet and healthy for him. For, as they say, t'is good reason, that the body follow not his appetites to the mindes prejudice or damage. But why is it not likewise reason, that the minde should not follow hers to the bodies danger and hurt? I have no other passion that keeps me in breath. What avarice, ambition, quarels, sutes in law, or other contentions worke and effect in others, who as my selfe have no assigned vacation, or certaine leisure, love would performe more commodiously: It would restore me the vigilancie, sobrietie, grace and care of my person; and assure my countenance against the wrinckled frownes of age (those deformed and wretched frownes) which els would blemish and deface the same; It would reduce me to serious, to sound and wise studies, whereby I might procure more love, and purchase more estimation: It would purge my minde from despaire of it selfe, and of it's use, acquainting the same againe with it selfe: It would divert me frō thousands of irksome tedious thoughts, and melancholie carking cares, wherewith the doting idlenesse and crazed condition of our age doth charge and comber us: It

would restore and heate, though but in a dreame, the bloud which nature forsaketh: It would uphold the drooping chinne, and somewhat strengthen or lengthen the shrunken finnowes, decayde vigor, and dulled lives-blithenesse of silly-wretched man, who gallops a pace to his ruine. But I am not ignorant how hard a matter it is to attaine to such a commoditie: Through weakenesse and long experience, our taste is growne more tender, more choise and more exquisite. We chalenge most, when we bring least; we are most desirous to choose, when we least deserve to be accepted: And knowing our selves to be such, we are lesse hardie and more distrustfull: Nothing can assure us to be beloved, seeing our condition and their qualitie. I am ashamed to be in the companie of this greene, blooming and boyling youth;

*Cuius in indomito constantior inguine neruus,
Quàm noua collibus arbor inhæret:*

Why should we present our wretchednesse amid this their jollitie?

*Possint ut iuuenes uisere feruidi
Multo non fine risu,
Dilapsam in cineres facem,*

*That hote young men may goe and see,
Not without sporte and mery glee,
Their fire-brands turn'd to ashes be.*

They have both strength and reason on their side: let us give them place: we have no longer holde fast. This bloome of budding beauty, loves not to be handled by such nummed, and so clomsie hands, nor would it be dealt-with by meanes or materiall or ordinary stuffe, For, as that ancient Philosopher answered one that mocked him, because hee could not obtaine the favour of a yongling, whom he suingly pursued: *My friend* (quoth he) *the hooke bites not at such fresh cheese*. It is a commerce needing relation and mutuall correspondencie: other pleasures that we receive, may be requitted by recompences of different nature: but this cannot be repaide but with the very same kinde of coyne. Verily, the pleasure I doe others in this sport, doth more sweetly tickle my imagination, then that is done unto me. Now if no generous minde, can receive pleasure where he returneth none; it is a base minde that would have all dutie and delights to feed with conference, those under whose charge he remaineth. There is no beautie, nor favour, nor familiaritie so exquisite, which a gallant minde should desire at this rate. Now if women can do us no good but in pittie, I had much rather not to live at all, then to live by almes. I would I had the priuledge to demande of them, in the same stile I have heard some beg in *Italy: Fate bene per voi, Doe some good for your selfe*: or after the manner that *Cyrus* exhorted his souldiers; *Whosoever loveth me, let him follow me*. Consort your selfe, will some say to me, with those of your owne condition, whome the companie of like fortune will yeelde of more easie accesse. Oh sottish and wallowish composition;

*nolo
Barbam uellere mortuo leoni.*

*I will not pull (though not afearde)
When he is dead a Lions beard.*

Xenophon useth for an objection and accusation against *Menon*, that in his love he dealt with fading objects. I take more sensuall pleasure by onely viewing the mutuall, even proporcioned and delicate commixture of two young beauties; or only to consider the same in mine imagination, then if my selfe should be second in a lumpish, sad and disproportioned conjunction. I refigne such distasted and fantastick appetites unto the Emperour *Galba*, who medled with none but cast, worne, hard-old flesh; And to that poore slave,

*O ego di'faciant talem te cernere possim,
Charáque mutatis oscula ferre comis,
Amplectique meis corpus non pingue lacertis.*

*Gods grant I may beholde thee in such case,
And kisse thy chang'd locks with my dearest grace,
And with mine armes thy limmes not fat embrace.*

And amongst blemishing-deformities, I deeme artificiall and forced beautie to be of the chieftest. *Emonez* a young lad of *Chios*, supposing by gorgeous attires to purchase the beautie, which nature denied him, came to the Philosopher *Acesilaus*, and asked of him, *whether a wise man could be in love, or no?* Yes *marrie* (quoth hee) *so it were not with a painted and sophisticate beautie, as thine is.* The fowlenesse of an olde knowne woman is in my seeming, not so aged nor so ill-favoured, as one that's painted and sleeked. Shall I bouldly speake it, and not have my throate cut for my labour? Love is not properlye nor naturallie in season, but in the age next unto *infancie*:

*Quam si puellarum insereres choro,
Mille sagaces falleret hospites,
Discrimen obscurum, solutis
Crinibus, ambiguoque uultu.*

*Whom if you should in crue of wenches place,
With haire loose-hanging, and ambiguous face,
Strangely the undiscern'd distinction might
Deceive a thousand strangers of sharpe sight.*

No more is perfect beautie. For, whereas *Homer* extends it untill such time as the chinne begins to bud. *Plato* himselfe hath noted the same for very rare. And the cause for which the Sophister *Dion* termed youthes budding hayres; *Aristogitons* and *Harmodiens*, is notoriouslie knowne. In man-hood I finde it alreadie to be somewhat out of date, much more in olde age.

*Importunus enim transuolat aridas
Quercus.*

*Importune love doth over-flie,
The Okes with withered olde-age drie.*

And Margaret Queene of Navarre, lengthens much (like a woman) the privilege of women: *Ordaining thirty yeares to be the season, for them to change the title of faire into good.* The shorter possession we allow it over our lives, the better for us. Behold it's behaviour, It is a princock boy, who in his schoole knowes not, how far one proceeds against all order: *study, exercise, custome and practise, are paths to insufficiencie:* there novices beare all the sway; *Amor ordinem nescit, Love knowes or keepes no order.* Surely it's course hath more garbe, when it is commixt with unadvisednesse and trouble: faultes and contrary successes, give it edge and grace: so it be eager and hungry, it little importeth whither it be prudent. Observe but how he staggers, stumbleth and fooleth; you fetter and shackle him, when you guide him by arte and discretion: and you force his sacred libertie, when you submit him to those bearded, grim and tough-hard hands. Moreover, I often heare them display this intelligence as absolutely spirituall disdainning to draw into consideration the interest which all the sences have in the same. All serveth to the purpose: But I may say, that I have often seen some of us excuse the weakenesse of their minds, in favour of their corporall beauties; but I never saw them yet, that in behalfe of the mindes-beauties, how sound and ripe soever they were, would afforde an helping-hand unto a body, that never so little falleth into declination. Why doth not some one of them long to produce that noble Socraticall brood; or breed that precious gem, betweene the body and the minde, purchasing with the price of her thighes a Philosophicall and spirituall breed and intelligence? which is the highest rate she can possibly value them at. *Plato* appointeth in his lawes, that he who performeth a notable and worthy exploite in warre, during the time of that expedition, should not be denide a kisse or refused any other amorous favour, of whomsoever he shall please to desire it, without respect either of his ill-favourdnes, deformitie, or age. What he deemeth so just and allowable in commendation of Militarie valour, may not the same be thought as lawfull in commendation of some other worth? and why is not some one of them possessed with the humor to preoccupate on hir companions the glory of this chaste love? chaste I may well say;

*nam si quando ad praelia uentum est,
Ut quondam stipulis magnus sine uiribus ignis
In cassum furit.*

*If once it come to handie-gripes; as great,
But force-lesse fire in stubble; so his heate
Rageth amaine, but all in vaine.*

Vices smothered in ones thought, are not the worst. To conclude this notable commentarie, escaped from me by a flux of babling: a flux sometimes as violent, as hurtfull,

*Vt missum sponsi furtiuo munere malum,
Procurrit casto uirginis è gremio:
Quod miseræ oblitæ molli sub ueste locatum,
Dum aduentu matris prosilit, excutitur,
Atque illud prono præceps agitur decursu,
Huic manat tristi conscius ore rubor.*

*As when some fruite by stealth sent from hir friend,
From chaste lap of a virgin doth descend,
Which by hir, under hir soft aprone plast,
Starting at mothers comming thence is cast;
And trilling downe in hast doth head-long goe,
A guiltie blush in hir sad face doth floe.*

I say, that both male and female, are cast in one same moulde; instruction and custome excepted, there is no great difference betweene them: Plato calleth them both indifferently to the societie of all studies, exercises, charges and functions of warre and peace, in his Commonwealth. And the Philosopher Antisthenes tooke away all distinction betweene their vertue and ours. It is much more easie to accuse the one sexe, then to excuse the other. It is that which some say proverbiale. Ill may the Kill call the Oven burnt taile.

NOTES

- 1 "By our Lady!"
- 2 Those two lines are set wrong. *quaenam ista...* should come first.