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Of Anger

Lucius Annaeus Seneca

Translated by Sir Roger L'Estrange

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Introduction

Of Anger, in the edition presented here, is Sir Roger L'Estrange's seventeenth-century abstract of Senecan moral teaching on anger, revenge and cruelty. First published within Seneca's *Morals by Way of Abstract*, its twelve thematic chapters condense and rearrange material associated principally with Seneca's three-book dialogue *De Ira*. It is not a chapter-for-chapter translation of that ancient work. L'Estrange selects arguments, examples and practical remedies, placing them into a compact English manual intended for moral use.

The opening chapter defines anger as a desire to punish someone believed to have caused injury. Seneca's distinctive concern is that anger belongs to rational creatures because it requires judgement. Animals may display aggression, fear or excitement, but anger in the strict sense involves a conclusion: a wrong has occurred and retaliation is appropriate. This connection with judgement makes anger morally dangerous, but it also makes correction possible.

The second chapter analyses anger as a sequence. An involuntary first movement may arise before reflection: the body tightens, an impression of injury appears, and emotion begins to stir. A further movement accepts the impression and judges that revenge should follow. Once assent has been given, anger can become difficult to govern. The practical point is to intervene between impression and settled purpose, before the mind commits itself to retaliation.

L'Estrange's compilation repeatedly rejects the claim that anger is necessary for courage, punishment or public authority. Reason can recognise wrongdoing and impose consequences without becoming enraged. Anger does not strengthen judgement; it rushes beyond evidence, exaggerates offence and treats severity as proof of seriousness. A good decision should remain proportionate even when the offence is real.

The chapters on causes and occasions examine how expectation magnifies resentment. People become angry because others fail to show deference, gratitude, punctuality or agreement. Pride interprets ordinary frustration as deliberate contempt. Suspicion then supplies missing evidence, and the mind punishes an imagined motive as though it were an established fact.

Delay is the principal remedy. Time separates the first appearance from action, permits facts to emerge and reduces the bodily intensity that narrows judgement. Delay is not weakness or refusal to address wrongdoing. It creates the conditions under which correction can serve justice rather than the pleasure of retaliation.

Self-knowledge provides another restraint. Remembering one's own errors makes it harder to treat every fault in another person as monstrous. Seneca does not ask for moral equivalence between all acts; he asks for awareness that human beings commonly misjudge, forget and fail. This humility moderates punishment and replaces the fantasy that anger belongs only to the innocent.

The compilation also considers anger in rulers. Power removes many external checks, allowing a private passion to become public terror. A ruler who treats cruelty as strength teaches dishonesty, fear and mutual suspicion throughout the community. Clemency, proportion and willingness to hear evidence are therefore political virtues as well as personal disciplines.

Cruelty differs from temporary anger because it can become pleasure or habit. The cruel person no longer seeks correction but enjoys suffering and display. L'Estrange's examples are historically severe, particularly where Roman emperors use humiliation and death as entertainment. Their excess demonstrates what happens when authority and appetite operate without rational limit.

The archaic language and arrangement reflect Restoration England as well as ancient Rome. L'Estrange explicitly presents his project as an abstract, gathering Seneca's scattered ethics under practical headings. Readers should therefore treat *Of Anger* as a historical interpretation of Senecan Stoicism, not as a substitute for the original structure and wording of *De Ira*.

Its central argument nevertheless remains clear. Anger is not an unavoidable master or a trustworthy instrument of justice. Because judgement participates in its growth, attention, delay, evidence, humility and proportion can interrupt it. Moral strength lies not in feeling the greatest fury, but in retaining enough government to respond to wrongdoing without becoming governed by it.

I.

ANGER DESCRIBED, IT IS AGAINST NATURE, AND ONLY TO BE FOUND IN MAN.

We are here to encounter the most outrageous, brutal, dangerous, and intractable of all passions; the most loathsome and unmannerly; nay, the most ridiculous too; and the subduing of this monster will do a great deal toward the establishment of human peace. It is the method of physicians to begin with a description of the disease, before they meddle with the cure: and I know not why this may not do as well in the distempers of the mind as in those of the body. The Stoics will have anger to be a "desire of punishing another for some injury done." Against which it is objected, that we are many times angry with those that never did hurt us, but possibly may, though the harm be not as yet done. But I say, that they hurt us already in conceit: and the very purpose of it is an injury in thought before it breaks out into act.

It is opposed again, that if anger were a desire of punishing, mean people would not be angry with great ones that are out of their reach; for no man can be said to desire any thing which he judges impossible to compass. But I answer to this, That anger is the desire, not the power and faculty of revenge; neither is any man so low, but that the greatest man alive may peradventure lie at his mercy. Aristotle takes anger to be, "a desire of paying sorrow for sorrow;" and of plaguing those that have plagued us. It is argued against both, that beasts are angry; though neither provoked by any injury, nor moved with a desire of any body's grief or punishment. Nay, though they cause it, they do not design or seek it. Neither is anger (how unreasonable soever in itself) found anywhere but in reasonable creatures.

It is true, the beasts have an impulse of rage and fierceness; as they are more affected also than men with some pleasures; but we may as well call them luxurious and ambitious as angry. And yet they are not without certain images of human affections. They have their likings and their loathings; but neither the passions of reasonable nature, nor their virtues, nor their vices. They are moved to fury by some objects; they are quieted by others; they have their terrors and their disappointments, but without reflection: and let them be never so much irritated or affrighted, so soon as ever the occasion is removed they fall to their meat again, and lie down and take their rest.

Wisdom and thought are the goods of the mind, whereof brutes are wholly incapable; and we are as unlike them within as we are without: they have an odd kind of fancy, and they have a voice too; but inarticulate and confused, and incapable of those variations which are familiar to us. Anger is not only a vice, but a vice point-blank against nature, for it divides instead of joining; and in some measure, frustrates the end of Providence in human society. One man was born to help another; anger makes us destroy one another; the one unites, the other

separates; the one is beneficial to us, the other mischievous; the one succors even strangers, the other destroys even the most intimate friends; the one ventures all to save another, the other ruins himself to undo another. Nature is bountiful, but anger is pernicious: for it is not fear, but mutual love that binds up mankind.

There are some motions that look like anger, which cannot properly be called so; as the passion of the people against the gladiators, when they hang off, and will not make so quick a dispatch as the spectators would have them: there is something in it of the humor of children, that if they get a fall, will never leave bawling until the naughty ground is beaten, and then all is well again. They are angry without any cause or injury; they are deluded by an imitation of strokes, and pacified with counterfeit tears. A false and a childish sorrow is appeased with as false and as childish a revenge. They take it for a contempt, if the gladiators do not immediately cast themselves upon the sword's point. They look presently about them from one to another, as who should say; "Do but see, my masters, how these rogues abuse us." To descend to the particular branches and varieties would be unnecessary and endless.

There is a stubborn, a vindictive, a quarrelsome, a violent, a froward, a sullen, a morose kind of anger; and then we have this variety in complication too. One goes no further than words; another proceeds immediately to blows, without a word speaking; a third sort breaks out into cursing and reproachful language; and there are that content themselves with chiding and complaining. There is a conciliable anger and there is an implacable; but in what form or degree soever it appears, all anger, without exception, is vicious.

II.

THE RISE OF ANGER.

The question will be here, whether anger takes its rise from impulse or judgment; that is, whether it be moved of its own accord, or, as many other things are, from within us, that arise we know not how? The clearing of this point will lead us to greater matters. The first motion of anger is in truth involuntary, and only a kind of menacing preparation towards it. The second deliberates; as who should say, "This injury should not pass without a revenge," and there it stops. The third is impotent; and, right or wrong, resolves upon vengeance. The first motion is not to be avoided, nor indeed the second, any more than yawning for company; custom and care may lessen it, but reason itself cannot overcome it. The third, as it rises upon consideration, it must fall so too, for that motion which proceeds with judgment may be taken away with judgment.

A man thinks himself injured, and hath a mind to be revenged, but for some reason lets it rest. This is not properly anger, but an affection overruled by reason; a kind of proposal disapproved—and what are reason and affection, but only changes of the mind for the better or for the worse? Reason deliberates before it judges; but anger passes sentence without deliberation. Reason only attends the matter in hand; but anger is startled at every accident; it passes the bounds of reason, and carries it away with it. In short, "anger is an agitation of the mind that proceeds to the resolution of a revenge, the mind assenting to it." There is no doubt but anger is moved by the species of an injury; but whether that motion be voluntary or involuntary is the point in debate; though it seems manifest to me that anger does nothing but where the mind goes along with it, for, first, to take an offence, and then to meditate a revenge, and after that to lay both propositions together, and say to myself, "This injury ought not to have been done; but as the case stands, I must do myself right." This discourse can never proceed without the concurrence of the will.

The first motion indeed is single; but all the rest is deliberation and superstructure—there is something understood and condemned—an indignation conceived and a revenge propounded. This can never be without the agreement of the mind to the matter in deliberation. The end of this question is to know the nature and quality of anger. If it be bred in us it will never yield to reason, for all involuntary motions are inevitable and invincible; as a kind of horror and shrugging upon the sprinkling of cold water; the hair standing on end at ill news; giddiness at the sight of a precipice; blushing at lewd discourse.

In these cases reason can do no good, but anger may undoubtedly be overcome by caution and good counsel, for it is a voluntary vice, and not of the condition of those accidents that befall us as frailties of our humanity, amongst which must be

reckoned the first motions of the mind after the opinion of an injury received, which it is not in the power of human nature to avoid, and this is it that affects us upon the stage, or in a story. Can any man read the death of Pompey, and not be touched with an indignation? The sound of a trumpet rouses the spirits and provokes courage. It makes a man sad to see the shipwreck even of an enemy; and we are much surprised by fear in other cases—all these motions are not so much affections as preludes to them.

The clashing of arms or the beating of a drum excites a war-horse: nay, a song from Xenophantes would make Alexander take his sword in his hand. In all these cases the mind rather suffers than acts, and therefore it is not an affection to be moved, but to give way to that motion, and to follow willingly what was started by chance—these are not affections, but impulses of the body. The bravest man in the world may look pale when he puts on his armor, his knees knock, and his heart work before the battle is joined: but these are only motions; whereas anger is an excursion, and proposes revenge or punishment, which cannot be without the mind. As fear flies, so anger assaults; and it is not possible to resolve, either upon violence or caution, without the concurrence of the will.

III.

ANGER MAY BE SUPPRESSED.

It is an idle thing to pretend that we cannot govern our anger; for some things that we do are much harder than others that we ought to do; the wildest affections may be tamed by discipline, and there is hardly anything which the mind will do but it may do. There needs no more argument in this case than the instances of several persons, both powerful and impatient, that have gotten the absolute mastery of themselves in this point. Thrasippus in his drink fell foul upon the cruelties of Pisistratus; who, when he was urged by several about him to make an example of him, returned this answer, "Why should I be angry with a man that stumbles upon me blindfold?" In effect most of our quarrels are of our own making, either by mistake or by aggravation. Anger comes sometimes upon us, but we go oftener to it, and instead of rejecting it we call it.

Augustus was a great master of his passion: for Timagenus, an historian, wrote several bitter things against his person and his family: which passed among the people plausibly enough, as pieces of rash wit commonly do. Cæsar advised him several times to forbear; and when that would not do, forbade him his roof. After this, Asinius Pollio gave him entertainment; and he was so well beloved in the city, that every man's house was open to him. Those things that he had written in honor of Augustus, he recited and burnt, and publicly professed himself Cæsar's enemy. Augustus, for all this, never fell out with any man that received him; only once, he told Pollio, that he had taken a snake into his bosom: and as Pollio was about to excuse himself; "No," says Cæsar, interrupting him, "make your best of him." And offering to cast him off at that very moment, if Cæsar pleased: "Do you think," says Cæsar, "that I will ever contribute to the parting of you, that made you friends?" for Pollio was angry with him before, and only entertained him now because Cæsar had discarded him.

The moderation of Antigonus was remarkable. Some of his soldiers were railing at him one night, where there was but a hanging betwixt them. Antigonus overheard them, and putting it gently aside; "Soldiers," says he, "stand a little further off, for fear the king should hear you." And we are to consider, not only violent examples, but moderate, where there wanted neither cause of displeasure nor power of revenge: as in the case of Antigonus, who the same night hearing his soldiers cursing him for bringing them into so foul a way, he went to them, and without telling them who he was, helped them out of it. "Now," says he, "you may be allowed to curse him that brought you into the mire, provided you bless him that took you out of it." It was a notable story that of Vedius Pallio, upon his inviting of Augustus to supper.

One of his boys happened to break a glass: and his master, in a rage, commanded him to be thrown in a pond to feed his lampreys. This action of his might be taken for luxury, though, in truth, it was cruelty. The boy was seized, but brake loose and threw himself at Augustus' feet, only desiring that he might not die that death. Cæsar, in abhorrence of the barbarity, presently ordered all the rest of the glasses to be broken, the boy to be released, and the pond to be filled up, that there might be no further occasion for an inhumanity of that nature. This was an authority well employed. Shall the breaking of a glass cost a man his life? Nothing but a predominant fear could ever have mastered his choleric and sanguinary disposition. This man deserved to die a thousand deaths, either for eating human flesh at second-hand in his lampreys, or for keeping of his fish to be so fed.

It is written of Præxaspes (a favorite of Cambyzes, who was much given to wine) that he took the freedom to tell this prince of his hard drinking, and to lay before him the scandal and the inconveniences of his excesses; and how that, in those distempers, he had not the command of himself. "Now," says Cambyzes, "to show you your mistake, you shall see me drink deeper than ever I did, and yet keep the use of my eyes, and of my hands, as well as if I were sober." Upon this he drank to a higher pitch than ordinary, and ordered Præxaspes' son to go out, and stand on the other side of the threshold, with his left arm over his head; "And," says he, "if I have a good aim, have at the heart of him." He shot, and upon cutting up the young man, they found indeed that the arrow had struck him through the middle of the heart.

"What do you think now," says Cambyzes, "is my hand steady or not?" "Apollo himself," says Præxaspes, "could not have outdone it." It may be a question now, which was the greater impiety, the murder itself, or the commendation of it; for him to take the heart of his son, while it was yet reeking and panting under the wound, for an occasion of flattery: why was there not another experiment made upon the father, to try if Cambyzes could not have yet mended his shot? This was a most unmanly violation of hospitality; but the approbation of the act was still worse than the crime itself. This example of Præxaspes proves sufficiently that a man may repress his anger; for he returned not one ill word, no not so much as a complaint; but he paid dear for his good counsel.

He had been wiser, perhaps, if he had let the king alone in his cups, for he had better have drunk wine than blood. It is a dangerous office to give good advice to intemperate princes. Another instance of anger suppressed, we have in Harpagus, who was commanded to expose Cyrus upon a mountain. But the child was preserved; which, when Astyages came afterwards to understand, he invited Harpagus to a dish of meat; and when he had eaten his fill, he told him it was a piece of his son, and asked him how he liked the seasoning. "Whatever pleases your Majesty," says Harpagus, "must please me:" and he made no more words of it. It is most certain, that we might govern our anger if we would; for the same thing that

galls us at home gives us no offence at all abroad; and what is the reason of it, but that we are patient in one place, and froward in another?

It was a strong provocation that which was given to Philip of Macedon, the father of Alexander. The Athenians sent their ambassadors to him, and they were received with this compliment, "Tell me, gentlemen," says Philip, "what is there that I can do to oblige the Athenians?" Democharas, one of the ambassadors, told him, that they would take it for a great obligation if he would be pleased to hang himself. This insolence gave an indignation to the by-standers; but Philip bade them not to meddle with him, but even to let that foul-mouthed fellow go as he came. "And for you, the rest of the ambassadors," says he, "pray tell the Athenians, that it is worse to speak such things than to hear and forgive them." This wonderful patience under contumelies was a great means of Philip's security.

IV.

IT IS A SHORT MADNESS, AND A DEFORMED VICE.

He was much in the right, whoever it was, that first called anger a short madness; for they have both of them the same symptoms; and there is so wonderful a resemblance betwixt the transports of choler and those of frenzy, that it is a hard matter to know the one from the other. A bold, fierce, and threatening countenance, as pale as ashes, and, in the same moment, as red as blood; a glaring eye, a wrinkled brow, violent motions, the hands restless and perpetually in action, wringing and menacing, snapping of the joints, stamping with the feet, the hair starting, trembling of the lips, a forced and squeaking voice; the speech false and broken, deep and frequent sighs, and ghastly looks; the veins swell, the heart pants, the knees knock; with a hundred dismal accidents that are common to both distempers.

Neither is anger a bare resemblance only of madness, but many times an irrevocable transition into the thing itself. How many persons have we known, read, and heard of, that have lost their wits in a passion, and never came to themselves again? It is therefore to be avoided, not only for moderation's sake, but also for health. Now, if the outward appearance of anger be so foul and hideous, how deformed must that miserable mind be that is harassed with it? for it leaves no place either for counsel or friendship, honesty or good manners; no place either for the exercise of reason, or for the offices of life.

If I were to describe it, I would draw a tiger bathed in blood, sharp set, and ready to take a leap at his prey; or dress it up as the poets represent the furies, with whips, snakes, and flames; it should be sour, livid, full of scars, and wallowing in gore, raging up and down, destroying, grinning, bellowing, and pursuing; sick of all other things, and most of all, itself. It turns beauty into deformity, and the calmest counsels into fierceness: it disorders our very garments, and fills the mind with horror. How abominable is it in the soul then, when it appears so hideous even through the bones, the skin and so many impediments! Is not he a madman that has lost the government of himself, and is tossed hither and thither by his fury as by a tempest? the executioner and the murderer of his nearest friends?

The smallest matter moves it, and makes us unsociable and inaccessible. It does all things by violence, as well upon itself as others; and it is, in short; the master of all passions. There is not any creature so terrible and dangerous by nature, but it becomes fiercer by anger. Not that beasts have human affections, but certain impulses they have which come very near them. The boar foams, champs, and whets his tusks; the bull tosses his horns in the air, bounds, and tears up the ground with his feet; the lion roars and swings himself with his tail; the serpent swells; and there is a ghastly kind of fellness in the aspect of a mad dog. How great a

wickedness is it now to indulge a violence, that does not only turn a man into a beast, but makes even the most outrageous of beasts themselves to be more dreadful and mischievous!

A vice that carries along with it neither pleasure nor profit, neither honor nor security; but on the contrary, destroys us to all the comfortable and glorious purposes of our reasonable being. Some there are, that will have the root of it to be the greatness of mind. And, why may we not as well entitle impudence to courage, whereas the one is proud, the other brave; the one is gracious and gentle, the other rude and furious? At the same rate we may ascribe magnanimity to avarice, luxury, and ambition, which are all but splendid impotences, without measure and without foundation. There is nothing great but what is virtuous, nor indeed truly great, but what is also composed and quiet. Anger, alas! is but a wild impetuous blast, an empty tumor, the very infirmity of woman and children; a brawling, clamorous evil: and the more noise the less courage; as we find it commonly, that the boldest tongues have the faintest hearts.

V.

ANGER IS NEITHER WARRANTABLE NOR USEFUL.

In the first place, Anger is unwarrantable as it is unjust: for it falls many times upon the wrong person, and discharges itself upon the innocent instead of the guilty: beside the disproportion of making the most trivial offences to be capital, and punishing an inconsiderate word perhaps with torments, fetters, infamy, or death. It allows a man neither time nor means for defence, but judges a cause without hearing it, and admits of no mediation. It flies into the face of truth itself, if it be of the adverse party; and turns obstinacy in an error, into an argument of justice. It does every thing with agitation and tumult; whereas reason and equity can destroy whole families, if there be occasion for it, even to the extinguishing of their names and memories, without any indecency, either of countenance or action.

Secondly, It is unsociable to the highest point; for it spares neither friend nor foe; but tears all to pieces, and casts human nature into a perpetual state of war. It dissolves the bond of mutual society, insomuch that our very companions and relations dare not come near us; it renders us unfit for the ordinary offices of life: for we can neither govern our tongues, our hands, nor any part of our body. It tramples upon the laws of hospitality, and of nations, leaves every man to be his own carver, and all things, public and private, sacred and profane, suffer violence. Thirdly, It is to no purpose. "It is a sad thing," we cry, "to put up with these injuries, and we are not able to bear them;" as if any man that can bear anger could not bear an injury, which is much more supportable.

You will say that anger does some good yet, for it keeps people in awe, and secures a man from contempt; never considering, that it is more dangerous to be feared than despised. Suppose that an angry man could do as much as he threatens; the more terrible, he is still the more odious; and on the other side, if he wants power, he is the more despicable for his anger; for there is nothing more wretched than a choleric huff, that makes a noise, and nobody cares for it. If anger would be valuable because men are afraid of it, why not an adder, a toad, or a scorpion as well? It makes us lead the life of gladiators; we live, and we fight together. We hate the happy, despise the miserable, envy our superiors, insult our inferiors, and there is nothing in the world which we will not do, either for pleasure or profit.

To be angry at offenders is to make ourselves the common enemies of mankind, which is both weak and wicked; and we may as well be angry that our thistles do not bring forth apples, or that every pebble in our ground is not an oriental pearl. If we are angry both with young men and with old, because they do offend, why not with infants too, because they will offend? It is laudable to rejoice for anything that is well done; but to be transported for another man's doing ill, is narrow and sordid.

Nor is it for the dignity of virtue to be either angry or sad. It is with a tainted mind as with an ulcer, not only the touch, but the very offer at it, makes us shrink and complain; when we come once to be carried off from our poise, we are lost.

In the choice of a sword, we take care that it be wieldy and well mounted; and it concerns us as much to be wary of engaging in the excesses of ungovernable passions. It is not the speed of a horse altogether that pleases us unless we find that he can stop and turn at pleasure. It is a sign of weakness, and a kind of stumbling, for a man to run when he intends only to walk; and it behoves us to have the same command of our mind that we have of our bodies. Besides that the greatest punishment of an injury is the conscience of having done it; and no man suffers more than he that is turned over to the pain of a repentance. How much better is it to compose injuries than to revenge them?

For it does not only spend time, but the revenge of one injury exposes to more. In fine, as it is unreasonable to be angry at a crime, it is as foolish to be angry without one. But “may not an honest man then be allowed to be angry at the murder of his father, or the ravishing of his sister or daughter before his face?” No, not at all. I will defend my parents, and I will repay the injuries that are done them; but it is my piety and not my anger, that moves me to it. I will do my duty without fear or confusion, I will not rage, I will not weep; but discharge the office of a good man without forfeiting the dignity of a man.

If my father be assaulted, I will endeavor to rescue him; if he be killed, I will do right to his memory; find all this, not in any transport of passion, but in honor and conscience. Neither is there any need of anger where reason does the same thing. A man may be temperate, and yet vigorous, and raise his mind according to the occasion, more or less, as a stone is thrown according to the discretion and intent of the caster. How outrageous have I seen some people for the loss of a monkey or a spaniel! And were it not a shame to have the same sense for a friend that we have for a puppy; and to cry like children, as much for a bauble as for the ruin of our country? This is not the effect of reason, but of infirmity.

For a man indeed to expose his person for his prince, or his parents, or his friends, out of a sense of honesty, and judgment of duty, it is, without dispute, a worthy and a glorious action; but it must be done then with sobriety, calmness, and resolution. It is high time to convince the world of the indignity and uselessness of this passion, when it has the authority and recommendation of no less than Aristotle himself, as an affection very much conducing to all heroic actions that require heat and vigor: now, to show, on the other side, that it is not in any case profitable, we shall lay open the obstinate and unbridled madness of it: a wickedness neither sensible of infamy nor of glory, without either modesty or fear; and if it passes once from anger into a hardened hatred, it is incurable.

It is either stronger than reason, or it is weaker. If stronger, there is no contending with it; if weaker, reason will do the business without it. Some will have it that an angry man is good-natured and sincere; whereas, in truth, he only lays himself open out of heedlessness and want of caution. If it were in itself good the more of it the better; but in this case, the more the worse; and a wise man does his duty, without the aid of anything that is ill. It is objected by some, that those are the most generous creatures which are the most prone to anger. But, first, reason in man is impetuous in beasts. Secondly, without discipline it runs into audaciousness and temerity; over and above that, the same thing does not help all.

If anger helps the lion, it is fear that saves the stag, swiftness the hawk, and flight the pigeon: but man has God for his example (who is never angry) and not the creatures. And yet it is not amiss sometimes to counterfeit anger; as upon the stage; nay, upon the bench, and in the pulpit, where the imitation of it is more effectual than the thing itself. But it is a great error to take this passion either for a companion or for an assistant to virtue; that makes a man incapable of those necessary counsels by which virtue is to govern herself. Those are false and inauspicious powers, and destructive of themselves, which arise only from the accession and fervor of disease.

Reason judges according to right; anger will have every thing seem right, whatever it does, and when it has once pitched upon a mistake, it is never to be convinced, but prefers a pertinacity, even in the greatest evil, before the most necessary repentance. Some people are of opinion that anger inflames and animates the soldier; that it is a spur to bold and arduous undertakings; and that it were better to moderate than to wholly suppress it, for fear of dissolving the spirit and force of the mind. To this I answer, that virtue does not need the help of vice; but where there is any ardor of mind necessary, we may rouse ourselves, and be more or less brisk and vigorous as there is occasion: but all without anger still.

It is a mistake to say, that we may make use of anger as a common soldier, but not as a commander; for if it hears reason, and follows orders, it is not properly anger; and if it does not, it is contumacious and mutinous. By this argument a man must be angry to be valiant; covetous to be industrious; timorous to be safe, which makes our reason confederate with our affections. And it is all one whether passion be inconsiderate without reason, or reason ineffectual without passion; since the one cannot be without the other. It is true, the less the passion, the less is the mischief; for a little passion is the smaller evil.

Nay, so far is it from being of use or advantage in the field, that it is in place of all others where it is the most dangerous; for the actions of war are to be managed with order and caution, not precipitation and fancy; whereas anger is heedless and heady, and the virtue only of barbarous nations; which, though their bodies were much stronger and more hardened, were still worsted by the moderation and

discipline of the Romans. There is not upon the face of the earth a bolder or a more indefatigable nation than the Germans; not a braver upon a charge, nor a hardier against colds and heats; their only delights and exercise is in arms, to the utter neglect of all things else: and, yet upon the encounter, they are broken and destroyed through their own undisciplined temerity, even by the most effeminate of men.

The huntsman is not angry with the wild boar when he either pursues or receives him; a good swordsman watches his opportunity, and keeps himself upon his guard, whereas passion lays a man open: nay, it is one of the prime lessons in a fencing-school to learn not to be angry. If Fabius had been choleric, Rome had been lost; and before he conquered Hannibal he overcame himself. If Scipio had been angry, he would never have left Hannibal and his army (who were the proper objects of his displeasure) to carry the war into Afric and so compass his end by a more temperate way. Nay, he was so slow, that it was charged upon him for want of mettle and resolution. And what did the other Scipio? (Africanus I mean:) how much time did he spend before Numantia, to the common grief both of his country and himself?

Though he reduced it at last by so miserable a famine, that the inhabitants laid violent hands upon themselves, and left neither man, woman, nor child, to survive the ruins of it. If anger makes a man fight better, so does wine, frenzy, nay, and fear itself; for the greatest coward in despair does the greatest wonders. No man is courageous in his anger that was not so without it. But put the case, that anger by accident may have done some good, and so have fevers removed some distempers; but it is an odious kind of remedy that makes us indebted to a disease for a cure. How many men have been preserved by poison; by a fall from a precipice; by a shipwreck; by a tempest! does it therefore follow that we are to recommend the practice of these experiments?

“But in case of an exemplary and prostitute dissolution of manners, when Clodius shall be preferred, and Cicero rejected; when loyalty shall be broken upon the wheel, and treason sit triumphant upon the bench; is not this a subject to move the choler of any virtuous man?” No, by no means, virtue will never allow of the correcting of one vice by another; or that anger, which is the greater crime of the two, should presume to punish the less. It is the natural property of virtue to make a man serene and cheerful; and it is not for the dignity of a philosopher to be transported either with grief or anger; and then the end of anger is sorrow, the constant effect of disappointment and repentance. But, to my purpose.

If a man should be angry at wickedness, the greater the wickedness is, the greater must be his anger; and, so long as there is wickedness in the world he must never be pleased: which makes his quiet dependent upon the humor or manners of others. There passes not a day over our heads but he that is choleric shall have some cause

or other of displeasure, either from men, accidents, or business. He shall never stir out of his house but he shall meet with criminals of all sorts; prodigal, impudent, covetous, perfidious, contentious, children persecuting their parents, parents cursing their children, the innocent accused, the delinquent acquitted, and the judge practicing that in his chamber which he condemns upon the bench. In fine, wherever there are men there are faults; and upon these terms, Socrates himself should never bring the same countenance home again that he carried out with him.

If anger was sufferable in any case, it might be allowed against an incorrigible criminal under the hand of justice: but punishment is not matter of anger but of caution. The law is without passion, and strikes malefactors as we do serpents and venomous creatures, for fear of greater mischief. It is not for the dignity of a judge, when he comes to pronounce the fatal sentence, to express any motions of anger in his looks, words, or gestures: for he condemns the vice, not the man; and looks upon the wickedness without anger, as he does upon the prosperity of wicked men without envy. But though he be not angry, I would have him a little moved in point of humanity; but yet without any offence, either to his place or wisdom.

Our passions vary, but reason is equal; and it were a great folly for that which is stable, faithful, and sound, to repair for succor to that which is uncertain, false, and distempered. If the offender be incurable, take him out of the world, that if he will not be good he may cease to be evil; but this must be without anger too. Does any man hate an arm, or a leg, when he cuts it off; or reckon that a passion which is only a miserable cure? We knock mad dogs on the head, and remove scabbed sheep out of the fold: and this is not anger still, but reason, to separate the sick from the sound. Justice cannot be angry; nor is there any need of an angry magistrate for the punishment of foolish and wicked men.

The power of life and death must not be managed with passion. We give a horse the spur that is restive or jadish, and tries to cast his rider; but this is without anger too, and only to take down his stomach, and bring him, by correction, to obedience. It is true, that correction is necessary, yet within reason and bounds; for it does not hurt, but profits us under an appearance of harm. Ill dispositions in the mind are to be dealt with as those in the body: the physician first tries purging and abstinence; if this will not do, he proceeds to bleeding, nay, to dismembering rather than fail; for there is no operation too severe that ends in health.

The public magistrate begins with persuasion, and his business is to beget a detestation for vice, and a veneration for virtue; from thence, if need be, he advances to admonition and reproach, and then to punishments; but moderate and revocable, unless the wickedness be incurable, and then the punishment must be so too. There is only this difference, the physician when he cannot save his patient's life, endeavors to make his death easy; but the magistrate aggravates the death of the criminal with infamy and disgrace; not as delighting in the severity of it, (for no

good man can be so barbarous) but for example, and to the end that they that will do no good living may do some dead. The end of all correction is either the amendment of wicked men, or to prevent the influence of ill example: for men are punished with a respect to the future; not to expiate offenses committed, but for fear of worse to come.

Public offenders must be a terror to others; but still, all this while, the power of life and death must not be managed with passion. The medicine, in the mean time must be suited to the disease; infamy cures one, pain another, exile cures a third, beggary a fourth; but there are some that are only to be cured by the gibbet. I would be no more angry with a thief, or a traitor, than I am angry with myself when I open a vein. All punishment is but a moral or civil remedy. I do not do anything that is very ill, but yet I transgress often.

Try me first with a private reprehension, and then with a public; if that will not serve, see what banishment will do; if not that neither, load me with chains, lay me in prison: but if I should prove wicked for wickedness' sake, and leave no hope of reclaiming me, it would be a kind of mercy to destroy me. Vice is incorporated with me; and there is no remedy but the taking of both away together; but still without anger.

VI.

ANGER IN GENERAL, WITH THE DANGER AND EFFECTS OF IT.

There is no surer argument of a great mind than not to be transported to anger by any accident; the clouds and the tempests are formed below, but all above is quiet and serene; which is the emblem of a brave man, that suppresses all provocations, and lives within himself, modest, venerable, and composed: whereas anger is a turbulent humor, which, at first dash, casts off all shame, without any regard to order, measure, or good manners; transporting a man into misbecoming violences with his tongue, his hands, and every part of his body. And whoever considers the foulness and the brutality of this vice, must acknowledge that there is no such monster in Nature as one man raging against another, and laboring to sink that which can never be drowned but with himself for company. It renders us incapable either of discourse or of other common duties.

It is of all passions the most powerful; for it makes a man that is in love to kill his mistress, the ambitious man to trample upon his honors, and the covetous to throw away his fortune. There is not any mortal that lives free from the danger of it; for it makes even the heavy and the good-natured to be fierce and outrageous: it invades us like a pestilence, the lusty as well as the weak; and it is not either strength of body, or a good diet, that can secure us against it; nay, the most learned, and men otherwise of exemplary sobriety, are infected with it. It is so potent a passion that Socrates durst not trust himself with it. "Sirrah," says he to his man, "now would I beat you, if I were not angry with you!" There is no age or sect of men that escapes it.

Other vices take us one by one; but this, like an epidemical contagion, sweeps all: men, women, and children, princes and beggars, are carried away with it in shoals and troops as one man. It was never seen that a whole nation was in love with one woman, or unanimously bent upon one vice: but here and there some particular men are tainted with some particular crimes; whereas in anger, a single word many times inflames the whole multitude, and men betake themselves presently to fire and sword upon it; the rabble take upon them to give laws to their governors; the common soldiers to their officers, to the ruin, not only of private families, but of kingdoms: turning their arms against their own leaders, and choosing their own generals.

There is no public council, no putting things to the vote; but in a rage the mutineers divide from the senate, name their head, force the nobility in their own houses, and put them to death with their own hands. The laws of nations are violated, the persons of public ministers affronted, whole cities infected with a general madness, and no respite allowed for the abatement or discussing of this public tumor. The

ships are crowded with tumultuary soldiers; and in this rude and ill-boding manner they march, and act under the conduct only of their own passions. Whatever comes next serves them for arms, until at last they pay for their licentious rashness with the slaughter of the whole party: this is the event of a heady and inconsiderate war.

When men's minds are struck with the opinion of an injury, they fall on immediately wheresoever their passion leads them, without either order, fear, or caution: provoking their own mischief; never at rest till they come to blows; and pursuing their revenge, even with their bodies, upon the points of their enemies' weapons. So that the anger itself is much more hurtful for us than the injury that provokes it; for the one is bounded, but where the other will stop, no man living knows. There are no greater slaves certainly, than those that serve anger; for they improve their misfortunes by an impatience more insupportable than the calamity that causes it. Nor does it rise by degrees, as other passions, but flashes like gunpowder, blowing up all in a moment. Neither does it only press to the mark, but overbears everything in the way to it.

Other vices drive us, but this hurries us headlong; other passions stand firm themselves, though perhaps we cannot resist them; but this consumes and destroys itself: it falls like thunder or a tempest, with an irrevocable violence, that gathers strength in the passage, and then evaporates in the conclusion. Other vices are unreasonable, but this is unhealthful too; other distempers have their intervals and degrees, but in this we are thrown down as from a precipice: there is not anything so amazing to others, or so destructive to itself; so proud and insolent if it succeeds, or so extravagant if it be disappointed. No repulse discourages it, and, for want of other matter to work upon, it falls foul upon itself; and, let the ground be never so trivial, it is sufficient for the wildest outrage imaginable. It spares neither age, sex, nor quality.

Some people would be luxurious perchance, but that they are poor; and others lazy, if they were not perpetually kept at work. The simplicity of a country life, keeps many men in ignorance of the frauds and impieties of courts and camps: but no nation or condition of men is exempt from the impressions of anger; and it is equally dangerous, as well in war as in peace. We find that elephants will be made familiar; bulls will suffer children to ride upon their backs, and play with their horns; bears and lions, by good usage, will be brought to fawn upon their masters; how desperate a madness is it then for men, after the reclaiming of the fiercest of beasts, and the bringing of them to be tractable and domestic, to become yet worse than beasts one to another!

Alexander had two friends, Clytus and Lysimachus; the one he exposed to a lion, the other to himself; and he that was turned loose to the beast escaped. Why do we not rather make the best of a short life, and render ourselves amiable to all while we live, and desirable when we die? Let us bethink ourselves of our mortality, and not

squander away the little time that we have upon animosities and feuds, as if it were never to be at an end. Had we not better enjoy the pleasure of our own life than to be still contriving how to gall and torment another's? in all our brawlings and contentions never so much as dreaming of our weakness. Do we not know that these implacable enmities of ours lie at the mercy of a fever, or any petty accident, to disappoint?

Our fate is at hand, and the very hour that we have set for another man's death may peradventure be prevented by our own. What is it that we make all this bustle for, and so needlessly disquiet our minds? We are offended with our servants, our masters, our princes, our clients: it is but a little patience, and we shall be all of us equal; so that there is no need either of ambushes or of combats. Our wrath cannot go beyond death; and death will most undoubtedly come whether we be peevish or quiet. It is time lost to take pains to do that which will infallibly be done without us. But suppose that we would only have our enemy banished, disgraced, or damaged, let his punishment be more or less, it is yet too long, either for him to be inhumanly tormented, or for us ourselves to be most barbarously pleased with it.

It holds in anger as in mourning, it must and it will at last fall of itself; let us look to it then betimes, for when it is once come to an ill habit, we shall never want matter to feed it; and it is much better to overcome our passions than to be overcome by them. Some way or other, either our parents, children, servants, acquaintance, or strangers, will be continually vexing us. We are tossed hither and thither by our affections, like a feather in a storm, and by fresh provocations the madness becomes perpetual. Miserable creatures! that ever our precious hours should be so ill employed! How prone and eager are we in our hatred, and how backward in our love!

Were it not much better now to be making of friendships, pacifying of enemies, doing of good offices both public and private, than to be still meditating of mischief, and designing how to wound one man in his fame, another in his fortune, a third in his person? the one being so easy, innocent, and safe, and the other so difficult, impious, and hazardous. Nay, take a man in chains, and at the foot of his oppressor; how many are there, who, even in this case, have maimed themselves in the heat of their violence upon others. This untractable passion is much more easily kept out than governed when it is once admitted; for the stronger will give laws to the weaker; and make reason a slave to the appetite.

It carries us headlong; and in the course of our fury, we have no more command of our minds, than we have of our bodies down a precipice: when they are once in motion, there is no stop until they come to the bottom. Not but that it is possible for a man to be warm in winter, and not to sweat in the summer, either by the benefit of the place, or the hardiness of the body: and in like manner we may provide against anger. But certain it is, that virtue and vice can never agree in the same subject; and

one may as well be a sick man and a sound at the same time, as a good man, and an angry. Besides, if we will needs be quarrelsome, it must be either with our superior, our equal, or inferior.

To contend with our superior is folly and madness: with our equals, it is doubtful and dangerous: and with our inferiors, it is base. For does any man know but that he that is now our enemy may come hereafter to be our friend, over and above the reputation of clemency and good nature? And what can be more honorable or comfortable, than to exchange a feud for a friendship? The people of Rome never had more faithful allies than those that were at first the most obstinate enemies; neither had the Roman Empire ever arrived at that height of power, if Providence had not mingled the vanquished with the conquerors. There is an end of the contest when one side deserts it; so that the paying of anger with benefits puts a period to the controversy. But, however, if it be our fortune to transgress, let not our anger descend to the children, friends or relations, even of our bitterest enemies.

The very cruelty of Sylla was heightened by that instance of incapacitating the issue of the proscribed. It is inhuman to entail the hatred we have for the father upon his posterity. A good and a wise man is not to be an enemy of wicked men, but a reprover of them; and he is to look upon all the drunkards, the lustful, the thankless, covetous, and ambitious, that he meets with, not otherwise than as a physician looks upon his patients; for he that will be angry with any man must be displeased with all; which were as ridiculous as to quarrel with a body for stumbling in the dark; with one that is deaf, for not doing as you bid him; or with a school-boy for loving his play better than his book. Democritus laughed, and Heraclitus wept, at the folly and wickedness of the world, but we never read of any angry philosopher.

This is undoubtedly the most detestable of vices, even compared with the worst of them. Avarice scrapes and gathers together that which somebody may be the better for: but anger lashes out, and no man comes off gratis. An angry master makes one servant run away, and another hang himself; and his choler causes him a much greater loss than he suffered in the occasion of it. It is the cause of mourning to the father, and of divorce to the husband: it makes the magistrate odious, and gives the candidate a repulse. And it is worse than luxury too, which only aims at its proper pleasure; whereas the other is bent upon another body's pain. The malevolent and the envious content themselves only to wish another man miserable; but it is the business of anger to make him so, and to wreck the mischief itself; not so much desiring the hurt of another, as to inflict it.

Among the powerful, it breaks out into open war, and into a private one with the common people, but without force or arms. It engages us in treacheries, perpetual troubles and contentions: it alters the very nature of a man, and punishes itself in the persecution of others. Humanity excites us to love, this to hatred; that to be beneficial to others, this to hurt them: beside, that, though it proceeds from too high

a conceit of ourselves, it is yet, in effect, but a narrow and contemptible affection; especially when it meets with a mind that is hard and impenetrable, and returns the dart upon the head of him that casts it.

To take a farther view, now, of the miserable consequences and sanguinary effects of this hideous distemper; from hence come slaughters and poisons, wars, and desolations, the razing and burning of cities; the unpeopling of nations, and the turning of populous countries into deserts, public massacres and regicides; princes led in triumph; some murdered in their bed-chambers; others stabbed in the senate or cut off in the security of their spectacles and pleasures. Some there are that take anger for a princely quality; as Darius, who, in his expedition against the Scythians, being besought by a nobleman, that had three sons, that he would vouchsafe to accept of two of them into his service, and leave the third at home for a comfort to his father. "I will do more for you than that," says Darius, "for you shall have them all three again;" so he ordered them to be slain before his face, and left him their bodies.

But Xerxes dealt a little better with Pythius, who had five sons, and desired only one of them for himself. Xerxes bade him take his choice, and he named the eldest, whom he immediately commanded to be cut in halves; and one half of the body to be laid on each side of the way when his army was to pass betwixt them; undoubtedly a most auspicious sacrifice; but he came afterward to the end that he deserved; for he lived to see that prodigious power scattered and broken: and instead of military and victorious troops, to be encompassed with carcasses. But these, you will say, were only barbarous princes that knew neither civility nor letters; and these savage cruelties will be imputed perchance to their rudeness of manners, and want of discipline.

But what will you say then of Alexander the Great, that was trained up under the institution of Aristotle himself, and killed Clytus, his favorite and schoolfellow, with his own hand, under his own roof, and over the freedom of a cup of wine? And what was his crime? He was loth to degenerate from a Macedonian liberty into a Persian slavery; that is to say, he could not flatter. Lysimachus, another of his friends, he exposed to a lion; and this very Lysimachus, after he had escaped this danger, was never the more merciful when he came to reign himself; for he cut off the ears and nose of his friend Telesphorous; and when he had so disfigured him that he had no longer the face of a man, he threw him into a dungeon, and there kept him to be showed for a monster, as a strange sight.

The place was so low that he was fain to creep upon all fours, and his sides were galled too with the straitness of it. In this misery he lay half-famished in his own filth; so odious, so terrible, and so loathsome a spectacle, that the horror of his condition had even extinguished all pity for him. "Nothing was ever so unlike a man as the poor wretch that suffered this, saving the tyrant that acted it." Nor did this

merciless hardness only exercise itself among foreigners, but the fierceness of their outrages and punishments, as well as their vices, brake in upon the Romans. C. Marius, that had his statue set up everywhere, and was adored as a God, L. Sylla commanded his bones to be broken, his eyes to be pulled out, his hands to be cut off; and, as if every wound had been a several death, his body to be torn to pieces, and Catiline was the executioner.

A cruelty that was only fit for Marius to suffer, Sylla to command, and Catiline to act; but most dishonorable and fatal to the commonwealth, to fall indifferently upon the sword's point both of citizens and of enemies. It was a severe instance, that of Piso too. A soldier that had leave to go abroad with his comrade, came back to the camp at his time, but without his companion. Piso condemned him to die, as if he had killed him, and appoints a centurion to see the execution. Just as the headsman was ready to do his office, the other soldier appeared, to the great joy of the whole field, and the centurion bade the executioner hold his hand. Hereupon Piso, in a rage, mounts the tribunal, and sentences all three to death: the one because he was condemned, the other because it was for his sake that his fellow-soldier was condemned, the centurion for not obeying the order of his superior.

An ingenious piece of inhumanity, to contrive how to make three criminals, where effectively there were none. There was a Persian king that caused the noses of a whole nation to be cut off, and they were to thank him that he spared their heads. And this, perhaps, would have been the fate of the Macrobiani, (if Providence had not hindered it,) for the freedom they used to Cambyses' ambassadors, in not accepting the slavish terms that were offered them. This put Cambyses into such a rage, that he presently listed into his service every man that was able to bear arms; and, without either provisions or guides, marched immediately through dry and barren deserts, and where never any man had passed before him, to take his revenge. Before he was a third part of the way, his provisions failed him.

His men, at first, made shift with the buds of trees, boiled leather, and the like; but soon after there was not so much as a root or a plant to be gotten, nor a living creature to be seen; and then by lot every tenth man was to die for a nourishment to the rest, which was still worse than the famine. But yet this passionate king went on so far, until one part of his army was lost, and the other devoured, and until he feared that he himself might come to be served with the same sauce. So that at last he ordered a retreat, wanting no delicacies all this while for himself, while his soldiers were taking their chance who should die miserably, or live worse. Here was an anger taken up against a whole nation, that neither deserved any ill from him, nor was so much as known to him.

VII.

THE ORDINARY GROUNDS AND OCCASIONS OF ANGER.

In this wandering state of life we meet with many occasions of trouble and displeasure, both great and trivial; and not a day passes but, from men or things, we have some cause or other for offense; as a man must expect to be jostled, dashed, and crowded, in a populous city. One man deceives our expectation; another delays it; and a third crosses it; and if everything does not succeed to our wish, we presently fall out either with the person, the business, the place, our fortune, or ourselves. Some men value themselves upon their wit, and will never forgive anyone that pretends to lessen it; others are inflamed by wine: and some are distempered by sickness, weariness, watchings, love, care, etc. Some are prone to it, by heat of constitution; but moist, dry, and cold complexions are more liable to other affections; as suspicion, despair, fear, jealousy, etc.

But most of our quarrels are of our own contriving. One while we suspect upon mistake; and another while we make a great matter of trifles. To say the truth, most of those things that exasperate us are rather subjects of disgust than of mischief: there is a large difference betwixt opposing a man's satisfaction and not assisting it: betwixt taking away and not giving; but we reckon upon denying and deferring as the same thing; and interpret another's being for himself as if he were against us. Nay, we do many times entertain an ill opinion of well doing, and a good one of the contrary: and we hate a man for doing that very thing which we should hate him for on the other side, if he did not do it.

We take it ill to be opposed when there is a father perhaps, a brother, or a friend, in the case against us; when we should rather love a man for it; and only wish that he could be honestly of our party. We approve of the fact, and detest the doer of it. It is a base thing to hate the person whom we cannot but commend; but it is a great deal worse yet if we hate him for the very thing that deserves commendation. The things that we desire, if they be such as cannot be given to one without being taken away from another, must needs set those people together by the ears that desire the same thing. One man has a design upon my mistress, another upon mine inheritance; and that which should make friends makes enemies, our being all of a mind.

The general cause of anger is the sense or opinion of an injury; that is, the opinion either of an injury simply done, or of an injury done, which we have not deserved. Some are naturally given to anger, others are provoked to it by occasion; the anger of women and children is commonly sharp, but not lasting: old men are rather querulous and peevish. Hard labor, diseases, anxiety of thought, and whatsoever hurts the body or the mind, disposes a man to be froward, but we must not add fire to fire. He that duly considers the subject-matter of all our controversies and

quarrels, will find them low and mean, not worth the thought of a generous mind; but the greatest noise of all is about money. This is it that sets fathers and children together by the ears, husbands and wives; and makes way for sword and poison.

This is it that tires out courts of justice, enrages princes, and lays cities in the dust, to seek for gold and silver in the ruins of them. This is it that finds work for the judge to determine which side is least in the wrong; and whose is the more plausible avarice, the plaintiff's or the defendant's. And what is it that we contend for all this while, but those baubles that make us cry when we should laugh? To see a rich old cuff, that has nobody to leave his estate to, break his heart for a handful of dirt; and a gouty usurer, that has no other use of his fingers left him but to count withal; to see him, I say in the extremity of his fit, wrangling for the odd money in his interest. If all that is precious in Nature were gathered into one mass, it were not worth the trouble of a sober mind.

It were endless to run over all those ridiculous passions that are moved about meats and drinks, and the matter of our luxury; nay, about words, looks, actions, jealousies, mistakes, which are all of them as contemptible fooleries as those very baubles that children scratch and cry for. There is nothing great or serious in all that which we keep such a clutter about; the madness of it is, that we set too great a value upon trifles. One man flies out upon a salute, a letter, a speech, a question, a gesture, a wink, a look. An action moves one man; a word affects another; one man is tender of his family; another of his person; one sets up for an orator, another for a philosopher: this man will not bear pride, nor that man opposition. He that plays the tyrant at home, is gentle as a lamb abroad.

Some take offense if a man ask a favor of them, and others, if he does not. Every man has his weak side; let us learn which that is, and take a care of it; for the same thing does not work upon all men alike. We are moved like beasts at the idle appearances of things, and the fiercer the creature, the more is it startled. The sight of a red coat enrages a bull; a shadow provokes the asp; nay, so unreasonable are some men, that they take moderate benefits for injuries, and squabble about it with their nearest relations: "They have done this and that for others," they cry; "and they might have dealt better with us if they had pleased." Very good! and if it be less than we looked for, it may be yet more than we deserve.

Of all unquiet humors this is the worst, that will never suffer any man to be happy, so long as he sees a happier man than himself. I have known some men so weak as to think themselves contemned if a horse did but play the jade with them, that is yet obedient to another rider. A brutal folly to be offended at a mute animal; for no injury can be done us without the concurrence of reason. A beast may hurt us, as a sword or a stone, and no otherwise. Nay, there are that will complain of "foul weather, a raging sea, a biting winter," as if it were expressly directed to them; and this they charge upon Providence, whose operations are all of them so far from

being injurious, that they are beneficial to us. How vain and idle are many of those things that make us stark mad!

A resty horse, the overturning of a glass, the falling of a key, the dragging of a chair, a jealousy, a misconstruction. How shall that man endure the extremities of hunger and thirst that flies out into a rage for putting of a little too much water in his wine? What haste is there to lay a servant by the heels, or break a leg or an arm immediately for it, as if he were not to have the same power over him an hour after, that he has at that instant? The answer of a servant, a wife, a tenant, puts some people out of all patience; and yet they can quarrel with the government, for not allowing them the same liberty in public, which they themselves deny to their own families. If they say nothing, it is contumacy: if they speak or laugh, it is insolence.

As if a man had his ears given him only for music; whereas we must suffer all sorts of noises, good and bad, both of man and beast. How idle is it to start at the tinkling of a bell, or the creaking of a door, when, for all this delicacy, we must endure thunder! Neither are our eyes less curious and fantastical than our ears. When we are abroad, we can bear well enough with foul ways, nasty streets, noisome ditches; but a spot upon a dish at home, or an unswept hearth, absolutely distracts us. And what is the reason, but that we are patient in the one place, and fantastically peevish in the other? Nothing makes us more intemperate than luxury, that shrinks at every stroke, and starts at every shadow. It is death to some to have another sit above them, as if a body were ever the more or the less honest for the cushion.

But they are only weak creatures that think themselves wounded if they be but touched. One of the Sybarites, that saw a fellow hard at work a digging, desired him to give over, for it made him weary to see him: and it was an ordinary complaint with him, that “he could take no rest because the rose-leaves lay double under him.” When we are once weakened with our pleasures, everything grows intolerable. And we are angry as well with those things that cannot hurt us as with those that do. We tear a book because it is blotted; and our clothes, because they are not well made: things that neither deserve our anger nor feel it: the tailor, perchance, did his best, or, however, had no intent to displease us: if so, first, why should we be angry at all?

Secondly, why should we be angry with the thing for the man’s sake? Nay, our anger extends even to dogs, horses, and other beasts. It was a blasphemous and a sottish extravagance, that of Caius Cæsar, who challenged Jupiter for making such a noise with his thunder, that he could not hear his mimics, and so invented a machine in imitation of it to oppose thunder to thunder; a brutal conceit, to imagine, either that he could reach the Almighty, or that the Almighty could not reach him! And every jot as ridiculous, though not so impious, was that of Cyrus; who, in his design upon Babylon, found a river in his way that put a stop to his march: the current was strong, and carried away one of the horses that belonged to his own chariot: upon this he swore, that since it had obstructed his passage, it should never hinder any

body's else; and presently set his whole army to work upon it, which diverted it into a hundred and fourscore channels, and laid it dry.

In this ignoble and unprofitable employment he lost his time, and the soldiers their courage, and gave his adversaries an opportunity of providing themselves, while he was waging war with a river instead of an enemy.

VIII.

ADVICE IN THE CASES OF CONTUMELY AND REVENGE.

Of provocations to anger there are two sorts; there is an injury, and there is a contumely. The former in its own nature is the heavier; the other slight in itself, and only troublesome to a wounded imagination. And yet some there are that will bear blows, and death itself, rather than contumelious words. A contumely is an indignity below the consideration of the very law; and not worthy either of a revenge, or so much as a complaint. It is only the vexation and infirmity of a weak mind, as well as the practice of a haughty and insolent nature, and signifies no more to a wise and sober man than an idle dream, that is no sooner past than forgotten. It is true, it implies contempt; but what needs any man care for being contemptible to others, if he be not so to himself?

For a child in the arms to strike the mother, tear her hair, claw the face of her, and call her names, that goes for nothing with us, because the child knows not what he does. Neither are we moved at the impudence and bitterness of a buffoon, though he fall upon his own master as well as the guests; but, on the contrary, we encourage and entertain the freedom. Are we not mad then, to be delighted and displeased with the same thing, and to take that as an injury from one man, which passes only for a raillery from another? He that is wise will behave himself toward all men as we do to our children; for they are but children too, though they have gray hairs: they are indeed of a larger size, and their errors are grown up with them; they live without rule, they covet without choice, they are timorous and unsteady; and if at any time they happen to be quiet, it is more out of fear than reason.

It is a wretched condition to stand in awe of everybody's tongue; and whosoever is vexed at a reproach would be proud if he were commended. We should look upon contumelies, slanders, and ill words, only as the clamor of enemies, or arrows shot at a distance, that make a clattering upon our arms, but do no execution. A man makes himself less than his adversary by fancying that he is contemned. Things are only ill that are ill taken; and it is not for a man of worth to think himself better or worse for the opinion of others. He that thinks himself injured, let him say, "Either I have deserved this, or I have not.

If I have, it is a judgment; if I have not, it is an injustice: and the doer of it has more reason to be ashamed than the sufferers." Nature has assigned every man his post, which he is bound in honor to maintain, let him be never so much pressed. Diogenes was disputing of anger, and an insolent young fellow, to try if he could put him beside his philosophy, spit in his face: "Young man," says Diogenes, "this does not make me angry yet; but I am in some doubt whether I should be so or not." Some are so impatient that they cannot bear a contumely, even from a woman; whose very

beauty, greatness, and ornaments, are all of them little enough to vindicate her from any indecencies, without much modesty and discretion; nay, they will lay it to heart even from the meanest of servants.

How wretched is that man whose peace lies at the mercy of the people? A physician is not angry at the intemperance of a mad patient; nor does he take it ill to be railed at by a man in a fever; just so should a wise man treat all mankind as a physician does his patient; and looking upon them only as sick and extravagant, let their words and actions, whether good or bad, go equally for nothing, attending still his duty even in the coarsest offices that may conduce to their recovery. Men that are proud, froward, and powerful, he values their scorn as little as their quality, and looks upon them no otherwise than as people in the excess of a fever. If a beggar worships him, or if he takes no notice of him, it is all one to him; and with a rich man he makes it the same case.

Their honors and their injuries he accounts much alike; without rejoicing at the one, or grieving at the other. In these cases, the rule is to pardon all offenses, where there is any sign of repentance, or hope of amendment. It does not hold in injuries as in benefits, the requiting of the one with the other; for it is a shame to overcome in the one, and in the other to be overcome. It is the part of a great mind to despise injuries; and it is one kind of revenge to neglect a man as not worth it: for it makes the first aggressor too considerable. Our philosophy, methinks, might carry us up to the bravery of a generous mastiff, that can hear the barking of a thousand curs without taking any notice of them.

He that receives an injury from his superior, it is not enough for him to bear it with patience, and without any thought of revenge, but he must receive it with a cheerful countenance, and look as if he did not understand it too; for if he appear too sensible, he shall be sure to have more of it. "It is a damned humor in great men, that whom they wrong they will hate." It is well answered of an old courtier, that was asked how he kept so long in favor? "Why," says he, "by receiving injuries, and crying your humble servant for them." Some men take it for an argument of greatness to have revenge in their power; but so far is he that is under the dominion of anger from being great, that he is not so much as free.

Not but that anger is a kind of pleasure to some in the act of revenge; but the very word is inhuman, though it may pass for honest. "Virtue," in short, "is impenetrable, and revenge is only the confession of an infirmity." It is a fantastical humor, that the same jest in private should make us merry, and yet enrage us in public; nay, we will not allow the liberty that we take. Some raileries we account pleasant, others bitter: a conceit upon a squint-eye, a hunch-back, or any personal defect, passes for a reproach. And why may we not as well hear it as see it? Nay, if a man imitates our gait, speech, or any natural imperfection, it puts us out of all patience; as if the counterfeit were more grievous than the doing of the thing itself.

Some cannot endure to hear of their age, nor others of their poverty; and they make the thing the more taken notice of the more they desire to hide it. Some bitter jest (for the purpose) was broken upon you at the table: keep better company then. In the freedom of cups, a sober man will hardly contain himself within bounds. It sticks with us extremely sometimes, that the porter will not let us in to his great master. Will any but a madman quarrel with a cur for barking, when he may pacify him with a crust? What have we to do but to keep further off, and laugh at him? Fidus Cornelius (a tall slim fellow) fell downright a-crying in the senate-house at Corbulo's saying that "he looked like an ostrich." He was a man that made nothing of a lash upon his life and manners; but it was worse than death to him a reflection upon his person.

No man was ever ridiculous to others that laughed at himself first: it prevents mischief, and it is a spiteful disappointment of those that take pleasure in such abuses. Vatinius, (a man that was made up for scorn and hatred, scurrilous and impudent to the highest degree, but most abusively witty and with all this he was diseased, and deformed to extremity), his way, was always to make sport with himself, and so he prevented the mockeries of other people. There are none more abusive to others than they that lie most open to it themselves; but the humor goes round, and he that laughs at me to-day will have somebody to laugh at him to-morrow, and revenge my quarrel. But, however, there are some liberties that will never go down with some men. Asiaticus Valerius, (one of Caligula's particular friends, and a man of stomach, that would not easily digest an affront) Caligula told him in public what kind of bedfellow his wife was.

Good God! that ever any man should hear this, or a prince speak it, especially to a man of consular authority, a friend, and a husband: and in such a manner too as at once to own his disgust and his adultery. The tribune Chæreas had a weak broken voice, like an hermaphrodite; when he came to Caligula for the word, he would give him sometimes Venus, otherwhiles Priapus, as a slur upon him both ways. Valerius was afterwards the principal instrument in the conspiracy against him; and Chæreas, to convince him of his manhood, at one blow cleft him down the chin with his sword. No man was so forward as Caligula to break a jest, and no man so unwilling to bear it.

IX.

CAUTIONS AGAINST ANGER IN THE MATTER OF EDUCATION, CONVERSE, AND OTHER GENERAL RULES OF PREVENTING IT, BOTH IN OURSELVES AND OTHERS.

All that we have to say in particular upon this subject lies under these two heads: first, that we do not fall into anger; and secondly, that we do not transgress in it. As in the case of our bodies, we have some medicines to preserve us when we are well, and others to recover us when we are sick; so it is one thing not to admit it, and another thing to overcome it. We are, in the first place, to avoid all provocations, and the beginnings of anger: for if we be once down, it is a hard task to get up again. When our passion has got the better of our reason, and the enemy is received into the gate, we cannot expect that the conqueror should take conditions from the prisoner. And, in truth, our reason, when it is thus mastered, turns effectually into passion.

A careful education is a great matter; for our minds are easily formed in our youth, but it is a harder business to cure ill habits: beside that, we are inflamed by climate, constitution, company, and a thousand other accidents, that we are not aware of. The choice of a good nurse, and a well-natured tutor, goes a great way: for the sweetness both of the blood and of the manners will pass into the child. There is nothing breeds anger more than a soft and effeminate education; and it is very seldom seen that either the mother's or the school-master's darling ever comes to good. But my young master, when he comes into the world, behaves himself like a choleric coxcomb; for flattery, and a great fortune, nourish touchiness.

But it is a nice point so to check the seeds of anger in a child as not to take off his edge, and quench his spirits; whereof a principal care must be taken betwixt license and severity, that he be neither too much emboldened nor depressed. Commendation gives him courage and confidence; but then the danger is, of blowing him up into insolence and wrath: so that when to use the bit, and when the spur, is the main difficulty. Never put him to a necessity of begging anything basely: or if he does, let him go without it. Inure him to a familiarity where he has any emulation; and in all his exercises let him understand that it is generous to overcome his competitor, but not to hurt him. Allow him to be pleased when he does well, but not transported; for that will puff him up into too high a conceit of himself.

Give him nothing that he cries for till the dogged fit is over, but then let him have it when he is quiet; to show him that there is nothing to be gotten by being peevish. Chide him for whatever he does amiss, and make him betimes acquainted with the fortune that he was born to. Let his diet be cleanly, but sparing; and clothe him like the rest of his fellows: for by placing him upon that equality at first, he will be the

less proud afterward: and, consequently the less waspish and quarrelsome. In the next place, let us have a care of temptations that we cannot resist, and provocations that we cannot bear; and especially of sour and exceptious company: for a cross humor is contagious. Nor is it all that a man shall be the better for the example of a quiet conversation; but an angry disposition is troublesome, because it has nothing else to work upon.

We should therefore choose a sincere, easy, and temperate companion, that will neither provoke anger nor return it; nor give a man any occasion of exercising his distempers. Nor is it enough to be gentle, submissive, and humane, without integrity and plain-dealing; for flattery is as offensive on the other side. Some men would take a curse from you better than a compliment. Cælius, a passionate orator, had a friend of singular patience that supped with him, who had no way to avoid a quarrel but by saying amen to all that Cælius said. Cælius, taking this ill: "Say something against me," says he, "that you and I may be two;" and he was angry with him because he would not: but the dispute fell, as it needs must, for want of an opponent. He that is naturally addicted to anger, let him use a moderate diet, and abstain from wine; for it is but adding fire to fire.

Gentle exercises, recreations, and sports, temper and sweeten the mind. Let him have a care also of long and obstinate disputes; for it is easier not to begin them than to put an end to them. Severe studies are not good for him either, as law, mathematics; too much attention preys upon the spirits, and makes him eager: but poetry, history and those lighter entertainments, may serve him for diversion and relief. He that would be quiet, must not venture at things out of his reach, or beyond his strength; for he shall either stagger under the burden, or discharge it upon the next man he meets; which is the same case in civil and domestic affairs. Business that is ready and practicable goes off with ease; but when it is too heavy for the bearer, they fall both together.

Whatsoever we design, we should first take a measure of ourselves, and compare our force with the undertaking; for it vexes a man not to go through with his work: a repulse inflames a generous nature, as it makes one that is phlegmatic, sad. I have known some that have advised looking in a glass when a man is in the fit, and the very spectacle of his own deformity has cured him. Many that are troublesome in their drink, and know their own infirmity, give their servant order beforehand to take them away by force for fear of mischief, and not to obey their masters themselves when they are hot-headed. If the thing were duly considered we should need no other cure than the bare consideration of it. We are not angry at madmen, children, and fools, because they do not know what they do: and why should not imprudence have an equal privilege in other cases?

If a horse kick, or a dog bite, shall a man kick or bite again? The one, it is true, is wholly void of reason, but it is also an equivalent darkness of mind that possesses

the other. So long as we are among men, let us cherish humanity, and so live that no man may be either in fear or in danger of us. Losses, injuries, reproaches, calumnies, they are but short inconveniences, and we should bear them with resolution. Beside that, some people are above our anger, others below it. To contend with our superiors were a folly, and with our inferiors an indignity. There is hardly a more effectual remedy against anger than patience and consideration.

Let but the first fervor abate, and that mist which darkens the mind will be either lessened or dispelled; a day, nay, an hour, does much in the most violent cases, and perchance totally suppresses it; time discovers the truth of things, and turns that into judgment which at first was anger. Plato was about to strike his servant, and while his hand was in the air, he checked himself, but still held it in that menacing posture. A friend of his took notice of it, and asked him what he meant? "I am now," says Plato, "punishing of an angry man;" so that he had left his servant to chastise himself. Another time his servant having committed a great fault: "Speusippus," says he, "do you beat that fellow, for I am angry," so that he forebore striking him for the very reason that would have made another man have done it.

"I am angry," says he, "and shall go further than becomes me." Nor is it fit that a servant should be in his power that is not his own master. Why should any one venture now to trust an angry man with a revenge, when Plato durst not trust himself? Either he must govern that, or that will undo him. Let us do our best to overcome it, but let us, however, keep it close, without giving it any vent. An angry man, if he gives himself liberty at all times, will go too far. If it comes once to show itself in the eye or countenance, it has got the better of us. Nay, we should so oppose it as to put on the very contrary dispositions; calm looks, soft and slow speech, an easy and deliberate march, and by little and little, we may possibly bring our thoughts into sober conformity with our actions.

When Socrates was angry, he would take himself in it, and speak low, in opposition to the motions of his displeasure. His friends would take notice of it; and it was not to his disadvantage neither, but rather to his credit, that so many should know that he was angry, and nobody feel it; which could not have been, if he had not given his friends the same liberty of admonition which he himself took. And this course should we take; we should desire our friends not to flatter us in our follies, but to treat us with all liberties of reprehension, even when we are least willing to bear it, against so powerful and so insinuating an evil; we should call for help while we have our eyes in our head, and are yet masters of ourselves. Moderation is profitable for subjects, but more for princes, who have the means of executing all that their anger prompts them to.

When that power comes once to be exercised to a common mischief, it can never long continue; a common fear joining in one cause all their divided complaints. In a word now, how we may prevent, moderate, or master this impotent passion in

others. It is not enough to be sound ourselves, unless we endeavor to make others so, wherein we must accommodate the remedy to the temper of the patient. Some are to be dealt with by artifice and address: as, for example, "Why will you gratify your enemies to show yourself so much concerned? It is not worth your anger: it is below you: I am as much troubled at it myself as you can be; but you had better say nothing, and take your time to be even with them." Anger in some people is to be openly opposed; in others, there must be a little yielding, according to the disposition of the person.

Some are won by entreaties, others are gained by mere shame and conviction, and some by delay; a dull way of cure for a violent distemper, but this must be the last experiment. Other affections may be better dealt with at leisure; for they proceed gradually: but this commences and perfects itself in the same moment. It does not, like other passions, solicit and mislead us, but it runs away with us by force, and hurries us on with an irresistible temerity, as well to our own as to another's ruin: not only flying in the face of him that provokes us, but like a torrent, bearing down all before it.

There is no encountering the first heat and fury of it: for it is deaf and mad, the best way is (in the beginning) to give it time and rest, and let it spend itself: while the passion is too hot to handle, we may deceive it; but, however, let all instruments of revenge be put out of the way. It is not amiss sometimes to pretend to be angry too; and join with him, not only in the opinion of the injury, but in the seeming contrivance of a revenge. But this must be a person then that has some authority over him. This is a way to get time, and, by advising upon some greater punishment to delay the present. If the passion be outrageous, try what shame or fear can do. If weak, it is no hard matter to amuse it by strange stories, grateful news, or pleasant discourses.

Deceit, in this case, is friendship; for men must be cozened to be cured. The injuries that press hardest upon us are those which either we have not deserved, or not expected, or, at least, not in so high a degree. This arises from the love of ourselves: for every man takes upon him, like a prince, in this case, to practice all liberties, and to allow none, which proceeds either from ignorance or insolence. What news is it for people to do ill things? for an enemy to hurt us; nay, for a friend or a servant to transgress, and to prove treacherous, ungrateful, covetous, impious? What we find in one man we may in another, and there is more security in fortune than in men. Our joys are mingled with fear, and a tempest may arise out of a calm; but a skilful pilot is always provided for it.

X.

AGAINST RASH JUDGMENT.

It is good for every man to fortify himself on his weak side: and if he loves his peace he must not be inquisitive, and hearken to tale-bearers; for the man that is over-curious to hear and see everything, multiplies troubles to himself: for a man does not feel what he does not know. He that is listening after private discourse, and what people say of him, shall never be at peace. How many things that are innocent in themselves are made injuries yet by misconstruction! Wherefore, some things we are to pause upon, others to laugh at, and others again to pardon. Or, if we cannot avoid the sense of indignities, let us however shun the open profession of it, which may easily be done, as appears by many examples of those that have suppressed their anger under the awe of a greater fear.

It is a good caution not to believe any thing until we are very certain of it; for many probable things prove false, and a short time will make evidence of the undoubted truth. We are prone to believe many things which we are willing to hear, and so we conclude, and take up a prejudice before we can judge. Never condemn a friend unheard; or without letting him know his accuser, or his crime. It is a common thing to say, "Do not you tell that you had it from me: for if you do, I will deny it, and never tell you any thing again:" by which means friends are set together by the ears, and the informer slips his neck out of the collar. Admit no stories upon these terms: for it is an unjust thing to believe in private and to be angry openly.

He that delivers himself up to guess and conjecture runs a great hazard; for there can be no suspicion without some probable grounds; so that without much candor and simplicity, and making the best of every thing, there is no living in society with mankind. Some things that offend us we have by report; others we see or hear. In the first case, let us not be too credulous: some people frame stories that they may deceive us; others only tell what they hear, and are deceived themselves: some make it their sport to do ill offices, others do them only to pick a thank: there are some that would part the dearest friends in the world; others love to do mischief, and stand aloof off to see what comes of it.

If it be a small matter, I would have witnesses; but if it be a greater, I would have it upon oath, and allow time to the accused, and counsel too, and hear over and over again. In those cases where we ourselves are witnesses, we should take into consideration all the circumstances. If a child, it was ignorance: if a woman, a mistake: if done by command a necessity; if a man be injured, it is but *quod pro quo*: if a judge, he knows what he does: if a prince, I must submit; either if guilty, to justice, or if innocent, to fortune: if a brute, I make myself one by imitating it: if a calamity or disease, my best relief is patience: if providence, it is both impious and

vain to be angry at it: if a good man, I will make the best of it: if a bad, I will never wonder at it.

Nor is it only by tales and stories that we are inflamed, but suspicions, countenances, nay, a look or a smile, is enough to blow us up. In these cases, let us suspend our displeasure, and plead the cause of the absent. "Perhaps he is innocent; or, if not, I have time to consider of it and may take my revenge at leisure:" but when it is once executed it is not to be recalled. A jealous head is apt to take that to himself which was never meant him. Let us therefore trust to nothing but what we see, and chide ourselves where we are over-credulous. By this course we shall not be so easily imposed upon, nor put to trouble ourselves about things not worth the while: as the loitering of a servant upon an errand, and the tumbling of a bed, or the spilling of a glass of drink.

It is a madness to be disordered at these fooleries; we consider the thing done, and not the doer of it. "It may be he did it unwillingly, or by chance. It was a trick put upon him, or he was forced to it. He did it for reward perhaps, not hatred; nor of his own accord, but he was urged on to it." Nay, some regard must be had to the age of the person, or to fortune; and we must consult humanity and candor in the case. One does me a great mischief at unawares; another does me a very small one by design, or peradventure none at all, but intended me one. The latter was more in fault, but I will be angry with neither. We must distinguish betwixt what a man cannot do and what he will not.

"It is true he has once offended me; but how often has he pleased me! He has offended me often, and in other kinds; and why should not I bear it as well now as I have done?" Is he my friend? why then, "It was against his will." Is he my enemy? It is "no more than I looked for." Let us give way to wise men, and not squabble with fools; and say thus to ourselves, "We have all of us our errors." No man is so circumspect, so considerate, or so fearful of offending, but he has much to answer for. A generous prisoner cannot immediately comply with all the sordid and laborious offices of a slave. A footman that is not breathed cannot keep pace with his master's horse. He that is over-watched may be allowed to be drowsy.

All these things are to be weighed before we give any ear to the first impulse. If it be my duty to love my country, I must be kind also to my countrymen; if a veneration be due to the whole, so is a piety also to the parts: and it is the common interest to preserve them. We are all members of one body, and it is as natural to help one another as for the hands to help the feet, or the eyes the hands. Without the love and care of the parts, the whole can never be preserved, and we must spare one another because we are born for society, which cannot be maintained without a regard to particulars. Let this be a rule to us, never to deny a pardon, that does no hurt either to the giver or receiver.

That may be well enough in one which is ill in another; and therefore we are not to condemn anything that is common to a nation; for custom defends it. But much more pardonable are those things which are common to mankind. It is a kind of spiteful comfort, that whoever does me an injury may receive one; and that there is a power over him that is above me. A man should stand as firm against all indignities as a rock does against the waves. As it is some satisfaction to a man in a mean condition that there is no security in a more prosperous; and as the loss of a son in a corner is borne with more patience upon the sight of a funeral carried out of a palace; so are injuries and contempts the more tolerable from a meaner person, when we consider, that the greatest men and fortunes are not exempt.

The wisest also of mortals have their failings, and no man living is without the same excuse. The difference is, that we do not all of us transgress the same way; but we are obliged in humanity to bear one with another. We should, every one of us, bethink ourselves, how remiss we have been in our duties, how immodest in our discourses, how intemperate in our cups; and why not, as well, how extravagant we have been in our passions? Let us clear ourselves of this evil, purge our minds, and utterly root out all those vices, which upon leaving the least sting, will grow again and recover. We must think of everything, expect everything, that we may not be surprised. It is a shame, says Fabius, for a commander to excuse himself by saying, "I was not aware of it."

XI.

TAKE NOTHING ILL FROM ANOTHER MAN, UNTIL YOU HAVE MADE IT YOUR OWN CASE.

It is not prudent to deny a pardon to any man, without first examining if we stand not in need of it ourselves; for it may be our lot to ask it, even at his feet to whom we refuse it. But we are willing enough to do what we are very unwilling to suffer. It is unreasonable to charge public vices upon particular persons; for we are all of us wicked, and that which we blame in others we find in ourselves. It is not a paleness in one, or a leanness in another, but a pestilence that has laid hold upon all. It is a wicked world, and we make part of it; and the way to be quiet is to bear one with another.

“Such a man,” we cry, “has done me a shrewd turn, and I never did him any hurt.” Well, but it may be I have mischieved other people, or at least, I may live to do as much to him as that comes to. “Such a one has spoken ill things of me;” but if I first speak ill of him, as I do of many others, this is not an injury, but a repayment. What if he did overshoot himself? He was loth to lose his conceit perhaps, but there was no malice in it; and if he had not done me a mischief, he must have done himself one. How many good offices are there that look like injuries! Nay, how many have been reconciled and good friends after a professed hatred! Before we lay anything to heart, let us ask ourselves if we have not done the same thing to others.

But where shall we find an equal judge? He that loves another man’s wife (only because she is another’s) will not suffer his own to be so much looked upon. No man is so fierce against calumny as the evil speaker; none so strict exactors of modesty in a servant as those that are most prodigal of their own. We carry our neighbors’ crimes in sight, and we throw our own over our shoulders. The intemperance of a bad son is chastised by a worse father; and the luxury that we punish in others, we allow to ourselves. The tyrant exclaims against homicide; and sacrilege against theft. We are angry with the persons, but not with the faults.

Some things there are that cannot hurt us, and others will not; as good magistrates, parents, tutors, judges; whose reproof or correction we are to take as we do abstinence, bleeding, and other uneasy things, which we are the better for, in which cases, we are not so much to reckon upon what we suffer as upon what we have done. “I take it ill,” says one; and, “I have done nothing,” says another: when, at the same time, we make it worse, by adding arrogance and contumacy to our first error. We cry out presently, “What law have we transgressed?” As if the letter of the law were the sum of our duty, and that piety, humanity, liberality, justice, and faith, were things beside our business. No, no; the rule of human duty is of a greater

latitude; and we have many obligations upon us that are not to be found in the statute-books.

And yet we fall short of the exactness even of that legal innocence. We have intended one thing and done another; wherein only the want of success has kept us from being criminals. This very thing, methinks, should make us more favorable to delinquents, and to forgive not only ourselves, but the gods too; of whom we seem to have harder thoughts in taking that to be a particular evil directed to us, that befalls us only by the common law of mortality. In fine, no man living can absolve himself to his conscience, though to the world, perhaps, he may. It is true, that we are also condemned to pains and diseases, and to death too, which is no more than the quitting of the soul's house. But why should any man complain of bondage, that, wheresoever he looks, has his way open to liberty?

That precipice, that sea, that river, that well, there is freedom in the bottom of it. It hangs upon every crooked bow; and not only a man's throat, or his heart, but every vein in his body, opens a passage to it. To conclude, where my proper virtue fails me, I will have recourse to examples, and say to myself, Am I greater than Philip or Augustus, who both of them put up with greater reproaches? Many have pardoned their enemies, and shall not I forgive a neglect, a little freedom of the tongue? Nay, the patience but of a second thought does the business: for though the first shock be violent; take it in parts, and it is subdued. And, to wind up all in one word, the great lesson of mankind, as well in this as in all other cases, is, "to do as we would be done by."

XII.

OF CRUELTY.

There is so near an affinity betwixt anger and cruelty, that many people confound them; as if cruelty were only the execution of anger in the payment of a revenge: which holds in some cases, but not in others. There are a sort of men that take delight in the spilling of human blood, and in the death of those that never did them any injury, nor were ever so much suspected for it; as Apollodorus, Phalaris, Sinis, Procrustus, and others, that burnt men alive; whom we cannot so properly call angry as brutal, for anger does necessarily presuppose an injury, either done, or conceived, or feared, but the other takes pleasure in tormenting, without so much as pretending any provocation to it, and kills merely for killing sake.

The original of this cruelty perhaps was anger, which by frequent exercise and custom, has lost all sense of humanity and mercy, and they that are thus affected are so far from the countenance and appearance of men in anger, that they will laugh, rejoice, and entertain themselves with the most horrid spectacles, as racks, jails, gibbets, several sorts of chains and punishments, dilaceration of members, stigmatizing, and wild beasts, with other exquisite inventions of torture; and yet, at last the cruelty itself is more horrid and odious than the means by which it works. It is a bestial madness to love mischief; beside, that it is womanish to rage and tear. A generous beast will scorn to do it when he has any thing at his mercy. It is a vice for wolves and tigers, and no less abominable to the world than dangerous to itself.

The Romans had their morning and their meridian spectacles. In the former, they had their combats of men with wild beasts; and in the latter, the men fought one with another. "I went," says our author, "the other day to the meridian spectacles, in hope of meeting somewhat of mirth and diversion to sweeten the humors of those that had been entertained with blood in the morning; but it proved otherwise, for, compared with this inhumanity, the former was a mercy. The whole business was only murder upon murder: the combatants fought naked, and every blow was a wound. They do not contend for victory, but for death; and he that kills one man is to be killed by another. By wounds they are forced upon wounds which they take and give upon their bare breasts. Burn that rogue, they cry What!

Is he afraid of his flesh? Do but see how sneakingly that rascal dies. Look to yourselves, my masters, and consider of it: who knows but this may come to be your own case?" Wicked examples seldom fail of coming home at last to the authors. To destroy a single man may be dangerous; but to murder whole nations is only a more glorious wickedness. Private avarice and rigor are condemned, but oppression, when it comes to be authorized by an act of state, and to be publicly commanded, though particularly forbidden, becomes a point of dignity and honor. What a shame

is it for men to interworry one another, when yet the fiercest even of beasts are at peace with those of their own kind? This brutal fury puts philosophy itself to a stand. The drunkard, the glutton, the covetous, may be reduced; nay, and the mischief of it is that no vice keeps itself within its proper bounds.

Luxury runs into avarice, and when the reverence of virtue is extinguished, men will stick at nothing that carries profit along with it; man's blood is shed in wantonness—his death is a spectacle for entertainment, and his groans are music. When Alexander delivered up Lysimachus to a lion, how glad would he have been to have had nails and teeth to have devoured him himself: it would have too much derogated, he thought, from the dignity of his wrath, to have appointed a man for the execution of his friend. Private cruelties, it is true, cannot do much mischief, but in princes they are a war against mankind. C. Cæsar would commonly, for exercise and pleasure, put senators and Roman knights to the torture; and whip several of them like slaves, or put them to death with the most acute torments, merely for the satisfaction of his cruelty.

That Cæsar that “wished the people of Rome had but one neck, that he might cut it off at one blow;”—it was the employment, the study, and the joy of his life. He would not so much as give the expiring leave to groan, but caused their mouths to be stopped with sponges, or for want of them, with rags of their own clothes, that they might not breathe out so much as their last agonies at liberty; or, perhaps, lest the tormented should speak something which the tormentor had no mind to hear. Nay, he was so impatient of delay, that he would frequently rise from supper to have men killed by torch-light, as if his life and death had depended upon their dispatch before the next morning; to say nothing how many fathers were put to death in the same night with their sons (which was a kind of mercy in the prevention of their mourning).

And was not Sylla's cruelty prodigious too, which was only stopped for want of enemies? He caused seven thousand citizens of Rome to be slaughtered at once; and some of the senators being startled at their cries that were heard in the senate-house, “Let us mind our business,” says Sylla; “this is nothing but a few mutineers that I have ordered to be sent out of the way.” A glorious spectacle! says Hannibal, when he saw the trenches flowing with human blood; and if the rivers had run blood too, he would have liked it so much the better. Among the famous and detestable speeches that are committed to memory, I know none worse than that impudent and tyrannical maxim, “Let them hate me, so they fear me;” not considering that those that are kept in obedience by fear, are both malicious and mercenary, and only wait for an opportunity to change their master.

Beside that, whosoever is terrible to others is likewise afraid of himself. What is more ordinary than for a tyrant to be destroyed by his own guards? which is no more than the putting those crimes into practice which they learned of their masters. How

many slaves have revenged themselves of their cruel oppressors, though they were sure to die for it! but when it comes once to a popular tyranny, whole nations conspire against it. For “whosoever threatens all, is in danger of all,” over and above, that the cruelty of the prince increases the number of his enemies, by destroying some of them; for it entails an hereditary hatred upon the friends and relations of those that are taken away. And then it has this misfortune, that a man must be wicked upon necessity; for there is no going back; so that he must betake himself to arms, and yet he lives in fear.

He can neither trust to the faith of his friends, nor to the piety of his children; he both dreads death and wishes it; and becomes a greater terror to himself than he is to his people. Nay, if there were nothing else to make cruelty detestable, it were enough that it passes all bounds, both of custom and humanity; and is followed upon the heel with sword or poison. A private malice indeed does not move whole cities; but that which extends to all is every body’s mark. One sick person gives no great disturbance in a family; but when it comes to a depopulating plague, all people fly from it. And why should a prince expect any man to be good whom he has taught to be wicked? But what if it were safe to be cruel? Were it not still a sad thing, the very state of such a government?

A government that bears the image of a taken city, where there is nothing but sorrow, trouble, and confusion. Men dare not so much as trust themselves with their friends or with their pleasures. There is not any entertainment so innocent but it affords pretence of crime and danger. People are betrayed at their tables and in their cups, and drawn from the very theatre to the prison. How horrid a madness is it to be still raging and killing; to have the rattling of chains always in our ears; bloody spectacles before our eyes; and to carry terror and dismay wherever we go! If we had lions and serpents, to rule over us, this would be the manner of their government, saving that they agree better among themselves.

It passes for a mark of greatness to burn cities, and lay whole kingdoms waste; nor is it for the honor of a prince, to appoint this or that single man to be killed, unless they have whole troops, or (sometimes) legions, to work upon. But it is not the spoils of war and bloody trophies that make a prince glorious, but the divine power of preserving unity and peace. Ruin without distinction is more properly the business of a general deluge, or a conflagration. Neither does a fierce and inexorable anger become the supreme magistrate; “Greatness of mind is always meek and humble; but cruelty is a note and an effect of weakness, and brings down a governor to the level of a competitor.”

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