CHAPTER XXX——OF CANNIBALS

When King Pyrrhus invaded Italy, having viewed and considered the order of the army the Romans sent out to meet him; "I know not," said he, "what kind of barbarians" (for so the Greeks called all other nations) "these may be; but the disposition of this army that I see has nothing of barbarism in it."—[Plutarch, Life of Pyrrhus, c. 8.]—As much said the Greeks of that which Flaminius brought into their country; and Philip, beholding from an eminence the order and distribution of the Roman camp formed in his kingdom by Publius Sulpicius Galba, spake to the same effect. By which it appears how cautious men ought to be of taking things upon trust from vulgar opinion, and that we are to judge by the eye of reason, and not from common report.

I long had a man in my house that lived ten or twelve years in the New World, discovered in these latter days, and in that part of it where Villegaignon landed,—[At Brazil, in 1557.]—which he called Antarctic France. This discovery of so vast a country seems to be of very great consideration. I cannot be sure, that hereafter there may not be another, so many wiser men than we having been deceived in this. I am afraid our eyes are bigger than our bellies, and that we have more curiosity than capacity; for we grasp at all, but catch nothing but wind.

Plato brings in Solon,—[In Timaeus.]—telling a story that he had heard from the priests of Sais in Egypt, that of old, and before the Deluge, there was a great island called Atlantis, situate directly at the mouth of the straits of Gibraltar, which contained more countries than both Africa and Asia put together; and that the kings of that country, who not only possessed that Isle, but extended their dominion so far into the continent that they had a country of Africa as far as Egypt, and extending in Europe to Tuscany, attempted to encroach even upon Asia, and to subjugate all the nations that border upon the Mediterranean Sea, as far as the Black Sea; and to that effect overran all Spain, the Gauls, and Italy, so far as to penetrate into Greece, where the Athenians stopped them: but that some time after, both the Athenians, and they and their island, were swallowed by the Flood.

It is very likely that this extreme irruption and inundation of water made wonderful changes and alterations in the habitations of the earth, as 'tis said that the sea then divided Sicily from Italy—

"Haec loca, vi quondam et vasta convulsa ruina,  
Dissiluisse ferunt, quum proterneus utraque tellus  
Una forat"

["These lands, they say, formerly with violence and vast desolation convulsed, burst asunder, where erewhile were."—AEnid, iii. 414.]

Cyprus from Syria, the isle of Negropont from the continent of Beeotia, and elsewhere united lands that were separate before, by filling up the channel betwixt them with sand and mud:

"Sterilisque diu palus, aptaque remis,  
Vicinas urbes alit, et grave sentit aratrum."

["That which was once a sterile marsh, and bore vessels on its bosom, now feeds neighbouring cities, and admits the plough."—Horace, De Arte Poetica, v. 65.]
But there is no great appearance that this isle was this New World so lately discovered: for that almost touched upon Spain, and it were an incredible effect of an inundation, to have tumbled back so prodigious a mass, above twelve hundred leagues: besides that our modern navigators have already almost discovered it to be no island, but terra firma, and continent with the East Indies on the one side, and with the lands under the two poles on the other side; or, if it be separate from them, it is by so narrow a strait and channel, that it none the more deserves the name of an island for that.

It should seem, that in this great body, there are two sorts of motions, the one natural and the other febrific, as there are in ours. When I consider the impression that our river of Dordogne has made in my time on the right bank of its descent, and that in twenty years it has gained so much, and undermined the foundations of so many houses, I perceive it to be an extraordinary agitation: for had it always followed this course, or were hereafter to do it, the aspect of the world would be totally changed. But rivers alter their course, sometimes beating against the one side, and sometimes the other, and some times quietly keeping the channel. I do not speak of sudden inundations, the causes of which everybody understands. In Medoc, by the seashore, the Sieur d'Arsac, my brother, sees an estate he had there, buried under the sands which the sea vomits before it: where the tops of some houses are yet to be seen, and where his rents and domains are converted into pitiful barren pasturage. The inhabitants of this place affirm, that of late years the sea has driven so vehemently upon them, that they have lost above four leagues of land. These sands are her harbingers: and we now see great heaps of moving sand, that march half a league before her, and occupy the land.

The other testimony from antiquity, to which some would apply this discovery of the New World, is in Aristotle; at least, if that little book of Unheard of Miracles be his—[one of the spurious publications brought out under his name—D.W.]. He there tells us, that certain Carthaginians, having crossed the Atlantic Sea without the Straits of Gibraltar, and sailed a very long time, discovered at last a great and fruitful island, all covered over with wood, and watered with several broad and deep rivers, far remote from all terra firma; and that they, and others after them, allied by the goodness and fertility of the soil, went thither with their wives and children, and began to plant a colony. But the senate of Carthage perceiving their people by little and little to diminish, issued out an express prohibition, that none, upon pain of death, should transport themselves thither; and also drove out these new inhabitants; fearing, 'tis said, lest' in process of time they should so multiply as to supplant themselves and ruin their state. But this relation of Aristotle no more agrees with our new-found lands than the other.

This man that I had was a plain ignorant fellow, and therefore the more likely to tell truth: for your better-bred sort of men are much more curious in their observation, 'tis true, and discover a great deal more; but then they gloss upon it, and to give the greater weight to what they deliver, and allure your belief, they cannot forbear a little to alter the story; they never represent things to you simply as they are, but rather as they appeared to them, or as they would have them appear to you, and to gain the reputation of men of judgment, and the better to induce your faith, are willing to help out the business with something more than is real. Such a one was mine; and besides, he has at divers times brought to me several seamen and merchants who at the same time went the same voyage. I shall therefore content myself with his information, without inquiring what the cosmographers say to
the business. We should have topographers to trace out to us the particular places where they have been; but for having had this advantage over us, to have seen the Holy Land, they would have the privilege, forsooth, to tell us stories of all the other parts of the world beside. I would have every one write what he knows, and as much as he knows, but no more; and that not in this only but in all other subjects; for such a person may have some particular knowledge and experience of the nature of such a river, or such a fountain, who, as to other things, knows no more than what everybody does, and yet to give a currency to his little pittance of learning, will undertake to write the whole body of physics: a vice from which great inconveniences derive their original.

Now, to return to my subject, I find that there is nothing barbarous and savage in this nation, by anything that I can gather, excepting, that every one gives the title of barbarism to everything that is not in use in his own country. As, indeed, we have no other level of truth and reason than the example and idea of the opinions and customs of the place wherein we live: there is always the perfect religion, there the perfect government, there the most exact and accomplished usage of all things. They are savages at the same rate that we say fruits are wild, which nature produces of herself and by her own ordinary progress; whereas, in truth, we ought rather to call those wild whose natures we have changed by our artifice and diverted from the common order. In those, the genuine, most useful, and natural virtues and properties are vigorous and sprightly, which we have helped to degenerate in these, by accommodating them to the pleasure of our own corrupted palate. And yet for all this, our taste confesses a flavour and delicacy excellent even to emulation of the best of ours, in several fruits wherein those countries abound without art or culture. Neither is it reasonable that art should gain the pre-eminence of our great and powerful mother nature. We have so surcharged her with the additional ornaments and graces we have added to the beauty and riches of her own works by our inventions, that we have almost smothered her; yet in other places, where she shines in her own purity and proper lustre, she marvellously baffles and disgraces all our vain and frivolous attempts:

"Et veniunt hederae sponte sua melius; 
Surgit et in solis formosior arbutus antris; 
Et volucres nulls dulcius arte canunt."

["The ivy grows best spontaneously, the arbutus best in shady caves; 
and the wild notes of birds are sweeter than art can teach. —"Propertius, i. 2, 10."

Our utmost endeavours cannot arrive at so much as to imitate the nest of the least of birds, its contexture, beauty, and convenience: not so much as the web of a poor spider.

All things, says Plato,—[Laws, 10.]—are produced either by nature, by fortune, or by art; the greatest and most beautiful by the one or the other of the former, the least and the most imperfect by the last.

These nations then seem to me to be so far barbarous, as having received but very little form and fashion from art and human invention, and consequently to be not much remote from their original simplicity. The laws of nature, however, govern them still, not as yet much vitiated with any mixture of ours: but 'tis in such purity, that I am sometimes troubled we were not sooner
acquainted with these people, and that they were not discovered in those better times, when there were men much more able to judge of them than we are. I am sorry that Lycurgus and Plato had no knowledge of them; for to my apprehension, what we now see in those nations, does not only surpass all the pictures with which the poets have adorned the golden age, and all their inventions in feigning a happy state of man, but, moreover, the fancy and even the wish and desire of philosophy itself; so native and so pure a simplicity, as we by experience see to be in them, could never enter into their imagination, nor could they ever believe that human society could have been maintained with so little artifice and human patchwork. I should tell Plato that it is a nation wherein there is no manner of traffic, no knowledge of letters, no science of numbers, no name of magistrate or political superiority; no use of service, riches or poverty, no contracts, no successions, no dividends, no properties, no employments, but those of leisure, no respect of kindred, but common, no clothing, no agriculture, no metal, no use of corn or wine; the very words that signify lying, treachery, dissimulation, avarice, envy, detraction, pardon, never heard of.

—[This is the famous passage which Shakespeare, through Florio's version, 1603, or ed. 1613, p. 102, has employed in the "Tempest," ii. 1.]

How much would he find his imaginary Republic short of his perfection?

"Viri a diis recentes."

["Men fresh from the gods."—Seneca, Ep., 90.]

"Hos natura modos primum dedit."

["These were the manners first taught by nature."
—Virgil, Georgics, ii. 20.]

As to the rest, they live in a country very pleasant and temperate, so that, as my witnesses inform me, 'tis rare to hear of a sick person, and they moreover assure me, that they never saw any of the natives, either paralytic, bleareyed, toothless, or crooked with age. The situation of their country is along the sea-shore, enclosed on the other side towards the land, with great and high mountains, having about a hundred leagues in breadth between. They have great store of fish and flesh, that have no resemblance to those of ours: which they eat without any other cookery, than plain boiling, roasting, and broiling. The first that rode a horse thither, though in several other voyages he had contracted an acquaintance and familiarity with them, put them into so terrible a fright, with his centaur appearance, that they killed him with their arrows before they could come to discover who he was. Their buildings are very long, and of capacity to hold two or three hundred people, made of the barks of tall trees, reared with one end upon the ground, and leaning to and supporting one another at the top, like some of our barns, of which the covering hangs down to the very ground, and serves for the side walls. They have wood so hard, that they cut with it, and make their swords of it, and their grills of it to broil their meat. Their beds are of cotton, hung swinging from the roof, like our seamen's hammocks, every man his own, for the wives lie apart from their husbands. They rise with the sun, and so soon as they are up, eat for all day, for they have no more meals but that; they do not then drink, as Suidas reports of some other people of the East that never drank at their meals; but drink very often all day after, and
sometimes to a rousing pitch. Their drink is made of a certain root, and is of the colour of our claret, and they never drink it but lukewarm. It will not keep above two or three days; it has a somewhat sharp, brisk taste, is nothing heady, but very comfortable to the stomach; laxative to strangers, but a very pleasant beverage to such as are accustomed to it. They make use, instead of bread, of a certain white compound, like coriander seeds; I have tasted of it; the taste is sweet and a little flat. The whole day is spent in dancing. Their young men go a-hunting after wild beasts with bows and arrows; one part of their women are employed in preparing their drink the while, which is their chief employment. One of their old men, in the morning before they fall to eating, preaches to the whole family, walking from the one end of the house to the other, and several times repeating the same sentence, till he has finished the round, for their houses are at least a hundred yards long. Valour towards their enemies and love towards their wives, are the two heads of his discourse, never failing in the close, to put them in mind, that 'tis their wives who provide them their drink warm and well seasoned. The fashion of their beds, ropes, swords, and of the wooden bracelets they tie about their wrists, when they go to fight, and of the great canes, bored hollow at one end, by the sound of which they keep the cadence of their dances, are to be seen in several places, and amongst others, at my house. They shave all over, and much more neatly than we, without other razor than one of wood or stone. They believe in the immortality of the soul, and that those who have merited well of the gods are lodged in that part of heaven where the sun rises, and the accursed in the west.

They have I know not what kind of priests and prophets, who very rarely present themselves to the people, having their abode in the mountains. At their arrival, there is a great feast, and solemn assembly of many villages: each house, as I have described, makes a village, and they are about a French league distant from one another. This prophet declaims to them in public, exhorting them to virtue and their duty: but all their ethics are comprised in these two articles, resolution in war, and affection to their wives. He also prophesies to them events to come, and the issues they are to expect from their enterprises, and prompts them to or diverts them from war: but let him look to 't; for if he fail in his divination, and anything happen otherwise than he has foretold, he is cut into a thousand pieces, if he be caught, and condemned for a false prophet: for that reason, if any of them has been mistaken, he is no more heard of.

Divination is a gift of God, and therefore to abuse it, ought to be a punishable imposture. Amongst the Scythians, where their diviners failed in the promised effect, they were laid, bound hand and foot, upon carts loaded with firs and bavins, and drawn by oxen, on which they were burned to death.—[Herodotus, iv. 69.]—Such as only meddle with things subject to the conduct of human capacity, are excusable in doing the best they can: but those other fellows that come to delude us with assurances of an extraordinary faculty, beyond our understanding, ought they not to be punished, when they do not make good the effect of their promise, and for the temerity of their imposture?

They have continual war with the nations that live further within the mainland, beyond their mountains, to which they go naked, and without other arms than their bows and wooden swords, fashioned at one end like the head of our javelins. The obstinacy of their battles is wonderful, and they never end without great effusion of blood: for as to running away, they know not what it is. Every one for a trophy brings home the head of an enemy he has killed, which he fixes over the door of his house. After having a long time treated their prisoners very well, and given them all the regales they can think of, he to whom the prisoner belongs, invites a great assembly of his friends. They being come, he ties a rope to one of the arms of the prisoner, of which, at a
distance, out of his reach, he holds the one end himself, and gives to the friend he loves best the other arm to hold after the same manner; which being done, they two, in the presence of all the assembly, despatch him with their swords. After that, they roast him, eat him amongst them, and send some chops to their absent friends. They do not do this, as some think, for nourishment, as the Scythians ancienly did, but as a representation of an extreme revenge; as will appear by this: that having observed the Portuguese, who were in league with their enemies, to inflict another sort of death upon any of them they took prisoners, which was to set them up to the girdle in the earth, to shoot at the remaining part till it was stuck full of arrows, and then to hang them, they thought those people of the other world (as being men who had sown the knowledge of a great many vices amongst their neighbours, and who were much greater masters in all sorts of mischief than they) did not exercise this sort of revenge without a meaning, and that it must needs be more painful than theirs, they began to leave their old way, and to follow this. I am not sorry that we should here take notice of the barbarous horror of so cruel an action, but that, seeing so clearly into their faults, we should be so blind to our own. I conceive there is more barbarity in eating a man alive, than when he is dead; in tearing a body limb from limb by racks and torments, that is yet in perfect sense; in roasting it by degrees; in causing it to be bitten and worried by dogs and swine (as we have not only read, but lately seen, not amongst inveterate and mortal enemies, but among neighbours and fellow-citizens, and, which is worse, under colour of piety and religion), than to roast and eat him after he is dead.

Chrysippus and Zeno, the two heads of the Stoic sect, were of opinion that there was no hurt in making use of our dead carcasses, in what way soever for our necessity, and in feeding upon them too;—[Diogenes Laertius, vii. 188.]—as our own ancestors, who being besieged by Caesar in the city Alexia, resolved to sustain the famine of the siege with the bodies of their old men, women, and other persons who were incapable of bearing arms.

"Vascones, ut fama est, alimentis talibus usi
Produxere animas."

["'Tis said the Gascons with such meats appeased their hunger."
—Juvenal, Sat., xv. 93.]

And the physicians make no bones of employing it to all sorts of use, either to apply it outwardly; or to give it inwardly for the health of the patient. But there never was any opinion so irregular, as to excuse treachery, disloyalty, tyranny, and cruelty, which are our familiar vices. We may then call these people barbarous, in respect to the rules of reason: but not in respect to ourselves, who in all sorts of barbarity exceed them. Their wars are throughout noble and generous, and carry as much excuse and fair pretence, as that human malady is capable of; having with them no other foundation than the sole jealousy of valour. Their disputes are not for the conquest of new lands, for these they already possess are so fruitful by nature, as to supply them without labour or concern, with all things necessary, in such abundance that they have no need to enlarge their borders. And they are, moreover, happy in this, that they only covet so much as their natural necessities require: all beyond that is superfluous to them: men of the same age call one another generally brothers, those who are younger, children; and the old men are fathers to all. These leave to their heirs in common the full possession of goods, without any manner of division, or other title than what nature bestows upon her creatures, in bringing them into the world. If their neighbours pass over the mountains to assault them, and obtain a victory,
all the victors gain by it is glory only, and the advantage of having proved themselves the better in valour and virtue: for they never meddle with the goods of the conquered, but presently return into their own country, where they have no want of anything necessary, nor of this greatest of all goods, to know happily how to enjoy their condition and to be content. And those in turn do the same; they demand of their prisoners no other ransom, than acknowledgment that they are overcome: but there is not one found in an age, who will not rather choose to die than make such a confession, or either by word or look recede from the entire grandeur of an invincible courage. There is not a man amongst them who had not rather be killed and eaten, than so much as to open his mouth to entreat he may not. They use them with all liberality and freedom, to the end their lives may be so much the dearer to them; but frequently entertain them with menaces of their approaching death, of the torments they are to suffer, of the preparations making in order to it, of the mangling their limbs, and of the feast that is to be made, where their carcass is to be the only dish. All which they do, to no other end, but only to extort some gentle or submissive word from them, or to frighten them so as to make them run away, to obtain this advantage that they were terrified, and that their constancy was shaken; and indeed, if rightly taken, it is in this point only that a true victory consists:

"Victoria nulla est,
Quam quae confessor animo quoque subjugat hostes."

["No victory is complete, which the conquered do not admit to be so. — "Claudius, De Sexto Consulatu Honorii, v. 248."]

The Hungarians, a very warlike people, never pretend further than to reduce the enemy to their discretion: for having forced this confession from them, they let them go without injury or ransom, excepting, at the most, to make them engage their word never to bear arms against them again. We have sufficient advantages over our enemies that are borrowed and not truly our own; it is the quality of a porter, and no effect of virtue, to have stronger arms and legs; it is a dead and corporeal quality to set in array; 'tis a turn of fortune to make our enemy stumble, or to dazzle him with the light of the sun; 'tis a trick of science and art, and that may happen in a mean base fellow, to be a good fencer. The estimate and value of a man consist in the heart and in the will: there his true honour lies. Valour is stability, not of legs and arms, but of the courage and the soul; it does not lie in the goodness of our horse or our arms but in our own. He that falls obstinate in his courage—

"Si succiderit, de genu pugnat"

["If his legs fail him, he fights on his knees.
— "Seneca, De Providentia, c. 2."

—he who, for any danger of imminent death, abates nothing of his assurance; who, dying, yet darts at his enemy a fierce and disdainful look, is overcome not by us, but by fortune; he is killed, not conquered; the most valiant are sometimes the most unfortunate. There are defeats more triumphant than victories. Never could those four sister victories, the fairest the sun ever be held, of Salamis, Plataea, Mycale, and Sicily, venture to oppose all their united glories, to the single glory of the discomfiture of King Leonidas and his men, at the pass of Thermopylae. Who ever ran with a more glorious desire and greater ambition, to the winning, than Captain Iscolas to the certain loss of a battle?—[Diodorus Siculus, xv. 64.]—Who could have found out a more
subtle invention to secure his safety, than he did to assure his destruction? He was set to defend a
certain pass of Peloponnesus against the Arcadians, which, considering the nature of the place
and the inequality of forces, finding it utterly impossible for him to do, and seeing that all who
were presented to the enemy, must certainly be left upon the place; and on the other side,
reputing it unworthy of his own virtue and magnanimity and of the Lacedaemonian name to fail
in any part of his duty, he chose a mean betwixt these two extremes after this manner; the
youngest and most active of his men, he preserved for the service and defence of their country,
and sent them back; and with the rest, whose loss would be of less consideration, he resolved to
make good the pass, and with the death of them, to make the enemy buy their entry as dear as
possibly he could; as it fell out, for being presently environed on all sides by the Arcadians, after
having made a great slaughter of the enemy, he and his were all cut in pieces. Is there any trophy
dedicated to the conquerors which was not much more due to these who were overcome? The
part that true conquering is to play, lies in the encounter, not in the coming off; and the honour of
valour consists in fighting, not in subduing.

But to return to my story: these prisoners are so far from discovering the least weakness, for all
the terrors that can be represented to them, that, on the contrary, during the two or three months
they are kept, they always appear with a cheerful countenance; importune their masters to make
haste to bring them to the test, defy, rail at them, and reproach them with cowardice, and the
number of battles they have lost against those of their country. I have a song made by one of
these prisoners, wherein he bids them "come all, and dine upon him, and welcome, for they shall
withal eat their own fathers and grandfathers, whose flesh has served to feed and nourish him.
These muscles," says he, "this flesh and these veins, are your own: poor silly souls as you are,
you little think that the substance of your ancestors' limbs is here yet; notice what you eat, and
you will find in it the taste of your own flesh:" in which song there is to be observed an invention
that nothing relishes of the barbarian. Those that paint these people dying after this manner,
represent the prisoner spitting in the faces of his executioners and making wry mouths at them.
And 'tis most certain, that to the very last gasp, they never cease to brave and defy them both in
word and gesture. In plain truth, these men are very savage in comparison of us; of necessity,
they must either be absolutely so or else we are savages; for there is a vast difference betwixt
their manners and ours.

The men there have several wives, and so much the greater number, by how much they have the
greater reputation for valour. And it is one very remarkable feature in their marriages, that the
same jealousy our wives have to hinder and divert us from the friendship and familiarity of other
women, those employ to promote their husbands' desires, and to procure them many spouses; for
being above all things solicitous of their husbands' honour, 'tis their chiefest care to seek out, and
to bring in the most companions they can, forasmuch as it is a testimony of the husband's virtue.
Most of our ladies will cry out, that 'tis monstrous; whereas in truth it is not so, but a truly
matrimonial virtue, and of the highest form. In the Bible, Sarah, with Leah and Rachel, the two
wives of Jacob, gave the most beautiful of their handmaids to their husbands; Livia preferred the
passions of Augustus to her own interest; —[Suetonius, Life of Augustus, c. 71.]—and the wife
of King Deiotarbus, Stratonice, did not only give up a fair young maid that served her to her
husband's embraces, but moreover carefully brought up the children he had by her, and assisted
them in the succession to their father's crown.

And that it may not be supposed, that all this is done by a simple and servile obligation to their
common practice, or by any authoritative impression of their ancient custom, without judgment
or reasoning, and from having a soul so stupid that it cannot contrive what else to do, I must here give you some touches of their sufficiency in point of understanding. Besides what I repeated to you before, which was one of their songs of war, I have another, a love-song, that begins thus:

"Stay, adder, stay, that by thy pattern my sister may draw the fashion and work of a rich ribbon, that I may present to my beloved, by which means thy beauty and the excellent order of thy scales shall for ever be preferred before all other serpents."

Wherein the first couplet, "Stay, adder," &c., makes the burden of the song. Now I have conversed enough with poetry to judge thus much that not only there is nothing barbarous in this invention, but, moreover, that it is perfectly Anacreontic. To which it may be added, that their language is soft, of a pleasing accent, and something bordering upon the Greek termination.

Three of these people, not foreseeing how dear their knowledge of the corruptions of this part of the world will one day cost their happiness and repose, and that the effect of this commerce will be their ruin, as I presuppose it is in a very fair way (miserable men to suffer themselves to be deluded with desire of novelty and to have left the serenity of their own heaven to come so far to gaze at ours!), were at Rouen at the time that the late King Charles IX. was there. The king himself talked to them a good while, and they were made to see our fashions, our pomp, and the form of a great city. After which, some one asked their opinion, and would know of them, what of all the things they had seen, they found most to be admired? To which they made answer, three things, of which I have forgotten the third, and am troubled at it, but two I yet remember. They said, that in the first place they thought it very strange that so many tall men, wearing beards, strong, and well armed, who were about the king ('tis like they meant the Swiss of the guard), should submit to obey a child, and that they did not rather choose out one amongst themselves to command. Secondly (they have a way of speaking in their language to call men the half of one another), that they had observed that there were amongst us men full and crammed with all manner of commodities, whilst, in the meantime, their halves were begging at their doors, lean and half-starved with hunger and poverty; and they thought it strange that these necessitous halves were able to suffer so great an inequality and injustice, and that they did not take the others by the throats, or set fire to their houses.

I talked to one of them a great while together, but I had so ill an interpreter, and one who was so perplexed by his own ignorance to apprehend my meaning, that I could get nothing out of him of any moment: Asking him what advantage he reaped from the superiority he had amongst his own people (for he was a captain, and our mariners called him king), he told me, to march at the head of them to war. Demanding of him further how many men he had to follow him, he showed me a space of ground, to signify as many as could march in such a compass, which might be four or five thousand men; and putting the question to him whether or no his authority expired with the war, he told me this remained: that when he went to visit the villages of his dependence, they planed him paths through the thick of their woods, by which he might pass at his ease. All this does not sound very ill, and the last was not at all amiss, for they wear no breeches.

CHAPTER XLIX——OF ANCIENT CUSTOMS
I should willingly pardon our people for admitting no other pattern or rule of perfection than their own peculiar manners and customs; for 'tis a common vice, not of the vulgar only, but almost of all men, to walk in the beaten road their ancestors have trod before them. I am content, when they see Fabricius or Laelius, that they look upon their countenance and behaviour as barbarous, seeing they are neither clothed nor fashioned according to our mode. But I find fault with their singular indiscretion in suffering themselves to be so blinded and imposed upon by the authority of the present usage as every month to alter their opinion, if custom so require, and that they should so vary their judgment in their own particular concern. When they wore the busk of their doublets up as high as their breasts, they stiffly maintained that they were in their proper place; some years after it was slipped down betwixt their thighs, and then they could laugh at the former fashion as uneasy and intolerable. The fashion now in use makes them absolutely condemn the other two with so great resolution and so universal consent, that a man would think there was a certain kind of madness crept in amongst them, that infatuates their understandings to this strange degree. Now, seeing that our change of fashions is so prompt and sudden, that the inventions of all the tailors in the world cannot furnish out new whim-whams enow to feed our vanity withal, there will often be a necessity that the despised forms must again come in vogue, these immediately after fall into the same contempt; and that the same judgment must, in the space of fifteen or twenty years, take up half-a-dozen not only divers but contrary opinions, with an incredible lightness and inconstancy; there is not any of us so discreet, who suffers not himself to be gulled with this contradiction, and both in external and internal sight to be insensibly blinded.

I wish to muster up here some old customs that I have in memory, some of them the same with ours, the others different, to the end that, bearing in mind this continual variation of human things, we may have our judgment more clearly and firmly settled.

The thing in use amongst us of fighting with rapier and cloak was in practice amongst the Romans also:

"Sinistras sagis involvunt, gladiosque distringunt,"

["They wrapt their cloaks upon the left arm, and drew their swords."—De Bello Civili, i. 75.]

says Caesar; and he observes a vicious custom of our nation, that continues yet amongst us, which is to stop passengers we meet upon the road, to compel them to give an account who they are, and to take it for an affront and just cause of quarrel if they refuse to do it.

At the Baths, which the ancients made use of every day before they went to dinner, and as frequently as we wash our hands, they at first only bathed their arms and legs; but afterwards, and by a custom that has continued for many ages in most nations of the world, they bathed stark naked in mixed and perfumed water, looking upon it as a great simplicity to bathe in mere water. The most delicate and affected perfumed themselves all over three or four times a day. They often caused their hair to be pinched off, as the women of France have some time since taken up a custom to do their foreheads,

"Quod pectus, quod crura tibi, quod brachia veilis,"

["You pluck the hairs out of your breast, your arms, and thighs."
though they had ointments proper for that purpose:

"Psilotro nitet, aut acids latet oblita creta."

["She shines with unguents, or with chalk dissolved in vinegar."
—Idem, vi. 93, 9.]

They delighted to lie soft, and alleged it as a great testimony of hardiness to lie upon a mattress. They ate lying upon beds, much after the manner of the Turks in this age:

"Inde thoro pater AEneas sic orsus ab alto."

["Thus Father AEneas, from his high bed of state, spoke."
—AEneid, ii. 2.]

And 'tis said of the younger Cato, that after the battle of Pharsalia, being entered into a melancholy disposition at the ill posture of the public affairs, he took his repasts always sitting, assuming a strict and austere course of life. It was also their custom to kiss the hands of great persons; the more to honour and caress them. And meeting with friends, they always kissed in salutation, as do the Venetians:

"Gratatusque darem cum dulcibus oscula verbis."

["And kindest words I would mingle with kisses."
—Ovid, De Pont., iv. 9, 13]

In petitioning or saluting any great man, they used to lay their hands upon his knees. Pasicles the philosopher, brother of Crates, instead of laying his hand upon the knee laid it upon the private parts, and being roughly repulsed by him to whom he made that indecent compliment: "What," said he, "is not that part your own as well as the other?" —[Diogenes Laertius, vi. 89.]—They used to eat fruit, as we do, after dinner. They wiped their fundaments (let the ladies, if they please, mince it smaller) with a sponge, which is the reason that 'spongia' is a smutty word in Latin; which sponge was fastened to the end of a stick, as appears by the story of him who, as he was led along to be thrown to the wild beasts in the sight of the people, asking leave to do his business, and having no other way to despatch himself, forced the sponge and stick down his throat and choked himself.—[Seneca, Ep., 70.] They used to wipe, after coition, with perfumed wool:

"At tibi nil faciam; sed Iota mentula lana."

They had in the streets of Rome vessels and little tubs for passengers to urine in:

"Pusi saepe lacum propter se, ac dolia curta. Somno devincti, credunt extollere vestem."

["The little boys in their sleep often think they are near the public urinal, and raise their coats to make use of it."
—Lucretius, iv.]
They had collation betwixt meals, and had in summer cellars of snow to cool their wine; and some there were who made use of snow in winter, not thinking their wine cool enough, even at that cold season of the year. The men of quality had their cupbearers and carvers, and their buffoons to make them sport. They had their meat served up in winter upon chafing dishes, which were set upon the table, and had portable kitchens (of which I myself have seen some) wherein all their service was carried about with them:

"Has vobis epulas habete, lauti  
Nos offendimur ambulante caena."

["Do you, if you please, esteem these feasts: we do not like the ambulatory suppers."—Martial, vii. 48, 4.]

In summer they had a contrivance to bring fresh and clear rills through their lower rooms, wherein were great store of living fish, which the guests took out with their own hands to be dressed every man according to his own liking. Fish has ever had this pre-eminence, and keeps it still, that the grandees, as to them, all pretend to be cooks; and indeed the taste is more delicate than that of flesh, at least to my fancy. But in all sorts of magnificence, debauchery, and voluptuous inventions of effeminacy and expense, we do, in truth, all we can to parallel them; for our wills are as corrupt as theirs: but we want ability to equal them. Our force is no more able to reach them in their vicious, than in their virtuous, qualities, for both the one and the other proceeded from a vigour of soul which was without comparison greater in them than in us; and souls, by how much the weaker they are, by so much have they less power to do either very well or very ill.

The highest place of honour amongst them was the middle. The name going before, or following after, either in writing or speaking, had no signification of grandeur, as is evident by their writings; they will as soon say Oppius and Caesar, as Caesar and Oppius; and me and thee, as thee and me. This is the reason that made me formerly take notice in the life of Flaminius, in our French Plutarch, of one passage, where it seems as if the author, speaking of the jealousy of honour betwixt the AEtolians and Romans, about the winning of a battle they had with their joined forces obtained, made it of some importance, that in the Greek songs they had put the AEtolians before the Romans: if there be no amphibology in the words of the French translation.

The ladies, in their baths, made no scruple of admitting men amongst them, and moreover made use of their serving-men to rub and anoint them:

"Inguina succinctus nigri tibi servus aluta  
Stat, quoties calidis nuda foveris aquis."

["A slave—his middle girded with a black apron—stands before you,  
when, naked, you take a hot bath."—Martial, vii. 35, i.]

They all powdered themselves with a certain powder, to moderate their sweats.

The ancient Gauls, says Sidonius Apollinaris, wore their hair long before and the hinder part of the head shaved, a fashion that begins to revive in this vicious and effeminate age.
The Romans used to pay the watermen their fare at their first stepping into the boat, which we never do till after landing:

"Dum aes exigitur, dum mula ligatur,
Tota abit hora."

["Whilst the fare's paying, and the mule is being harnessed, a whole hour's time is past."—Horace, Sat. i. 5, 13.]

The women used to lie on the side of the bed next the wall: and for that reason they called Caesar,

"Spondam regis Nicomedis,"

["The bed of King Nicomedes."—Suetonius, Life of Caesar, 49.]

They took breath in their drinking, and watered their wine

"Quis puer ocius
Restinguet ardentis Falerni
Pocula praetereunte lympha?"

["What boy will quickly come and cool the heat of the Falernian wine with clear water?"—Horace, Od., ii. z, 18.]

And the roguish looks and gestures of our lackeys were also in use amongst them:

"O Jane, a tergo quern nulls ciconia pinsit,
Nec manus, auriculas imitari est mobilis albas,
Nec lingua, quantum sitiat canis Appula, tantum."

["O Janus, whom no crooked fingers, simulating a stork, peck at behind your back, whom no quick hands deride behind you, by imitating the motion of the white ears of the ass, against whom no mocking tongue is thrust out, as the tongue of the thirsty Apulian dog."—Persius, i. 58.]

The Argian and Roman ladies mourned in white, as ours did formerly and should do still, were I to govern in this point. But there are whole books on this subject.

CHAPTER XXXII——DEFENCE OF SENECA AND PLUTARCH

The familiarity I have with these two authors, and the assistance they have lent to my age and to my book, wholly compiled of what I have borrowed from them, oblige me to stand up for their honour.
As to Seneca, amongst a million of little pamphlets that those of the so-called reformed religion disperse abroad for the defence of their cause (and which sometimes proceed from so good a hand, that 'tis pity his pen is not employed in a better subject), I have formerly seen one, that to make up the parallel he would fain find out betwixt the government of our late poor King Charles IX. and that of Nero, compares the late Cardinal of Lorraine with Seneca; their fortunes, in having both of them been the prime ministers in the government of their princes, and in their manners, conditions, and deportments to have been very near alike. Wherein, in my opinion, he does the said cardinal a very great honour; for though I am one of those who have a very high esteem for his wit, eloquence, and zeal to religion and the service of his king, and his good fortune to have lived in an age wherein it was so novel, so rare, and also so necessary for the public good to have an ecclesiastical person of such high birth and dignity, and so sufficient and capable of his place; yet, to confess the truth, I do not think his capacity by many degrees near to the other, nor his virtue either so clean, entire, or steady as that of Seneca.

Now the book whereof I speak, to bring about its design, gives a very injurious description of Seneca, having borrowed its approaches from Dion the historian, whose testimony I do not at all believe for besides that he is inconsistent, that after having called Seneca one while very wise, and again a mortal enemy to Nero's vices, makes him elsewhere avaricious, an usurer, ambitious, effeminate, voluptuous, and a false pretender to philosophy, his virtue appears so vivid and vigorous in his writings, and his vindication is so clear from any of these imputations, as of his riches and extraordinarily expensive way of living, that I cannot believe any testimony to the contrary. And besides, it is much more reasonable to believe the Roman historians in such things than Greeks and foreigners. Now Tacitus and the rest speak very honourably both of his life and death; and represent him to us a very excellent and virtuous person in all things; and I will allege no other reproach against Dion's report but this, which I cannot avoid, namely, that he has so weak a judgment in the Roman affairs, that he dares to maintain Julius Caesar's cause against Pompey [And so does this editor. D.W.], and that of Antony against Cicero.

Let us now come to Plutarch: Jean Bodin is a good author of our times, and a writer of much greater judgment than the rout of scribblers of his age, and who deserves to be read and considered. I find him, though, a little bold in this passage of his Method of history, where he accuses Plutarch not only of ignorance (wherein I would have let him alone: for that is beyond my criticism), but that he "often writes things incredible, and absolutely fabulous": these are his own words. If he had simply said, that he had delivered things otherwise than they really are, it had been no great reproach; for what we have not seen, we are forced to receive from other hands, and take upon trust, and I see that he purposely sometimes variously relates the same story; as the judgment of the three best captains that ever were, given by Hannibal; 'tis one way in the Life of Flammius, and another in that of Pyrrhus. But to charge him with having taken incredible and impossible things for current pay, is to accuse the most judicious author in the world of want of judgment. And this is his example; "as," says he, "when he relates that a Lacedaemonian boy suffered his bowels to be torn out by a fox-cub he had stolen, and kept it still concealed under his coat till he fell down dead, rather than he would discover his theft." I find, in the first place, this example ill chosen, forasmuch as it is very hard to limit the power of the faculties of—the soul, whereas we have better authority to limit and know the force of the bodily limbs; and therefore, if I had been he, I should rather have chosen an example of this second sort; and there are some of these less credible: and amongst others, that which he refutes of Pyrrhus, that "all wounded as he was, he struck one of his enemies, who was armed from head
to foot, so great a blow with his sword, that he clave him down from his crown to his seat, so that the body was divided into two parts." In this example I find no great miracle, nor do I admit the excuse with which he defends Plutarch, in having added these words, "as 'tis said," to suspend our belief; for unless it be in things received by authority, and the reverence to antiquity or religion, he would never have himself admitted, or enjoined us to believe things incredible in themselves; and that these words, "as 'tis said," are not put in this place to that effect, is easy to be seen, because he elsewhere relates to us, upon this subject, of the patience of the Lacedaemonian children, examples happening in his time, more unlikely to prevail upon our faith; as what Cicero has also testified before him, as having, as he says, been upon the spot: that even to their times there were children found who, in the trial of patience they were put to before the altar of Diana, suffered themselves to be there whipped till the blood ran down all over their bodies, not only without crying out, but without so much as a groan, and some till they there voluntarily lost their lives: and that which Plutarch also, amongst a hundred other witnesses, relates, that at a sacrifice, a burning coal having fallen into the sleeve of a Lacedaemonian boy, as he was censing, he suffered his whole arm to be burned, till the smell of the broiling flesh was perceived by those present. There was nothing, according to their custom, wherein their reputation was more concerned, nor for which they were to undergo more blame and disgrace, than in being taken in theft. I am so fully satisfied of the greatness of those people, that this story does not only not appear to me, as to Bodin, incredible; but I do not find it so much as rare and strange. The Spartan history is full of a thousand more cruel and rare examples; and is; indeed, all miracle in this respect.

Marcellinus, concerning theft, reports that in his time there was no sort of torments which could compel the Egyptians, when taken in this act, though a people very much addicted to it, so much as to tell their name.

A Spanish peasant, being put to the rack as to the accomplices of the murder of the Praetor Lucius Piso, cried out in the height of the torment, "that his friends should not leave him, but look on in all assurance, and that no pain had the power to force from him one word of confession," which was all they could get the first day. The next day, as they were leading him a second time to another trial, strongly disengaging himself from the hands of his guards, he furiously ran his head against a wall, and beat out his brains.

Epicharis, having tired and glutted the cruelty of Nero's satellites, and undergone their fire, their beating, their racks, a whole day together, without one syllable of confession of her conspiracy; being the next day brought again to the rack, with her limbs almost torn to pieces, conveyed the lace of her robe with a running noose over one of the arms of her chair, and suddenly slipping her head into it, with the weight of her own body hanged herself. Having the courage to die in that manner, is it not to be presumed that she purposely lent her life to the trial of her fortitude the day before, to mock the tyrant, and encourage others to the like attempt?

And whoever will inquire of our troopers the experiences they have had in our civil wars, will find effects of patience and obstinate resolution in this miserable age of ours, and amongst this rabble even more effeminate than the Egyptians, worthy to be compared with those we have just related of the Spartan virtue.

I know there have been simple peasants amongst us who have endured the soles of their feet to be broiled upon a gridiron, their finger-ends to be crushed with the cock of a pistol, and their
bloody eyes squeezed out of their heads by force of a cord twisted about their brows, before they would so much as consent to a ransom. I have seen one left stark naked for dead in a ditch, his neck black and swollen, with a halter yet about it with which they had dragged him all night at a horse's tail, his body wounded in a hundred places, with stabs of daggers that had been given him, not to kill him, but to put him to pain and to affright him, who had endured all this, and even to being speechless and insensible, resolved, as he himself told me, rather to die a thousand deaths (as indeed, as to matter of suffering, he had borne one) before he would promise anything; and yet he was one of the richest husbandmen of all the country. How many have been seen patiently to suffer themselves to be burnt and roasted for opinions taken upon trust from others, and by them not at all understood? I have known a hundred and a hundred women (for Gascony has a certain prerogative for obstinacy) whom you might sooner have made eat fire than forsake an opinion they had conceived in anger. They are all the more exasperated by blows and constraint. And he that made the story of the woman who, in defiance of all correction, threats, and bastinadoes, ceased not to call her husband lousy knave, and who being plunged over head and ears in water, yet lifted her hands above her head and made a sign of cracking lice, feigned a tale of which, in truth, we every day see a manifest image in the obstinacy of women. And obstinacy is the sister of constancy, at least in vigour and stability.

We are not to judge what is possible and what is not, according to what is credible and incredible to our apprehension, as I have said elsewhere and it is a great fault, and yet one that most men are guilty of, which, nevertheless, I do not mention with any reflection upon Bodin, to make a difficulty of believing that in another which they could not or would not do themselves. Every one thinks that the sovereign stamp of human nature is imprinted in him, and that from it all others must take their rule; and that all proceedings which are not like his are feigned and false. Is anything of another's actions or faculties proposed to him? the first thing he calls to the consultation of his judgment is his own example; and as matters go with him, so they must of necessity do with all the world besides dangerous and intolerable folly! For my part, I consider some men as infinitely beyond me, especially amongst the ancients, and yet, though I clearly discern my inability to come near them by a thousand paces, I do not forbear to keep them in sight, and to judge of what so elevates them, of which I perceive some seeds in myself, as I also do of the extreme meanness of some other minds, which I neither am astonished at nor yet misbelieve. I very well perceive the turns those great souls take to raise themselves to such a pitch, and admire their grandeur; and those flights that I think the bravest I could be glad to imitate; where, though I want wing, yet my judgment readily goes along with them. The other example he introduces of "things incredible and wholly fabulous," delivered by Plutarch, is, that "Agesilaus was fined by the Ephori for having wholly engrossed the hearts and affections of his citizens to himself alone." And herein I do not see what sign of falsity is to be found: clearly Plutarch speaks of things that must needs be better known to him than to us; and it was no new thing in Greece to see men punished and exiled for this very thing, for being too acceptable to the people; witness the Ostracism and Petalism.—[Ostracism at Athens was banishment for ten years; petalism at Syracuse was banishment for five years.]

There is yet in this place another accusation laid against Plutarch which I cannot well digest, where Bodin says that he has sincerely paralleled Romans with Romans, and Greeks amongst themselves, but not Romans with Greeks; witness, says he, Demosthenes and Cicero, Cato and Aristides, Sylla and Lysander, Marcellus and Pelopidas, Pompey and Agesilaus, holding that he has favoured the Greeks in giving them so unequal companions. This is really to attack what in
Plutarch is most excellent and most to be commended; for in his parallels (which is the most admirable part of all his works, and with which, in my opinion, he is himself the most pleased) the fidelity and sincerity of his judgments equal their depth and weight; he is a philosopher who teaches us virtue. Let us see whether we cannot defend him from this reproach of falsity and prevarication. All that I can imagine could give occasion to this censure is the great and shining lustre of the Roman names which we have in our minds; it does not seem likely to us that Demosthenes could rival the glory of a consul, proconsul, and proctor of that great Republic; but if a man consider the truth of the thing, and the men in themselves, which is Plutarch's chiefest aim, and will rather balance their manners, their natures, and parts, than their fortunes, I think, contrary to Bodin, that Cicero and the elder Cato come far short of the men with whom they are compared. I should sooner, for his purpose, have chosen the example of the younger Cato compared with Phocion, for in this couple there would have been a more likely disparity, to the Roman's advantage. As to Marcellus, Sylla, and Pompey, I very well discern that their exploits of war are greater and more full of pomp and glory than those of the Greeks, whom Plutarch compares with them; but the bravest and most virtuous actions any more in war than elsewhere, are not always the most renowned. I often see the names of captains obscured by the splendour of other names of less desert; witness Labienus, Ventidius, Telesinus, and several others. And to take it by that, were I to complain on the behalf of the Greeks, could I not say, that Camillus was much less comparable to Themistocles, the Gracchi to Agis and Cleomenes, and Numa to Lycurgus? But 'tis folly to judge, at one view, of things that have so many aspects. When Plutarch compares them, he does not, for all that, make them equal; who could more learnedly and sincerely have marked their distinctions? Does he parallel the victories, feats of arms, the force of the armies conducted by Pompey, and his triumphs, with those of Agesilaus? "I do not believe," says he, "that Xenophon himself, if he were now living, though he were allowed to write whatever pleased him to the advantage of Agesilaus, would dare to bring them into comparison." Does he speak of paralleling Lysander to Sylla. "There is," says he, "no comparison, either in the number of victories or in the hazard of battles, for Lysander only gained two naval battles." This is not to derogate from the Romans; for having only simply named them with the Greeks, he can have done them no injury, what disparity soever there may be twixt them and Plutarch does not entirely oppose them to one another; there is no preference in general; he only compares the pieces and circumstances one after another, and gives of every one a particular and separate judgment. Wherefore, if any one could convict him of partiality, he ought to pick out some one of those particular judgments, or say, in general, that he was mistaken in comparing such a Greek to such a Roman, when there were others more fit and better resembling to parallel him to.

CHAPTER VI——OF COACHES

It is very easy to verify, that great authors, when they write of causes, not only make use of those they think to be the true causes, but also of those they believe not to be so, provided they have in them some beauty and invention: they speak true and usefully enough, if it be ingeniously. We cannot make ourselves sure of the supreme cause, and therefore crowd a great many together, to see if it may not accidentally be amongst them:

"Namque unam dicere causam"
Non satis est, verum plures, unde una tamen sit."

[Lucretius, vi. 704.—The sense is in the preceding passage.]

Do you ask me, whence comes the custom of blessing those who sneeze? We break wind three several ways; that which sallies from below is too filthy; that which breaks out from the mouth carries with it some reproach of gluttony; the third is sneezing, which, because it proceeds from the head and is without offence, we give it this civil reception: do not laugh at this distinction; they say 'tis Aristotle's.

I think I have seen in Plutarch' (who of all the authors I know, is he who has best mixed art with nature, and judgment with knowledge), his giving as a reason for the, rising of the stomach in those who are at sea, that it is occasioned by fear; having first found out some reason by which he proves that fear may produce such an effect. I, who am very subject to it, know well that this cause concerns not me; and I know it, not by argument, but by necessary experience. Without instancing what has been told me, that the same thing often happens in beasts, especially hogs, who are out of all apprehension of danger; and what an acquaintance of mine told me of himself, that though very subject to it, the disposition to vomit has three or four times gone off him, being very afraid in a violent storm, as it happened to that ancient:

"Pejus vexabar, quam ut periculum mihi succurreret;"

["I was too ill to think of danger." (Or the reverse:)
"I was too frightened to be ill."—Seneca, Ep., 53. 2]

I was never afraid upon the water, nor indeed in any other peril (and I have had enough before my eyes that would have sufficed, if death be one), so as to be astounded to lose my judgment. Fear springs sometimes as much from want of judgment as from want of courage. All the dangers I have been in I have looked upon without winking, with an open, sound, and entire sight; and, indeed, a man must have courage to fear. It formerly served me better than other help, so to order and regulate my retreat, that it was, if not without fear, nevertheless without affright and astonishment; it was agitated, indeed, but not amazed or stupefied. Great souls go yet much farther, and present to us flights, not only steady and temperate, but moreover lofty. Let us make a relation of that which Alcibiades reports of Socrates, his fellow in arms: "I found him," says he, "after the rout of our army, him and Lachez, last among those who fled, and considered him at my leisure and in security, for I was mounted on a good horse, and he on foot, as he had fought. I took notice, in the first place, how much judgment and resolution he showed, in comparison of Lachez, and then the bravery of his march, nothing different from his ordinary gait; his sight firm and regular, considering and judging what passed about him, looking one while upon those, and then upon others, friends and enemies, after such a manner as encouraged those, and signified to the others that he would sell his life dear to any one who should attempt to take it from him, and so they came off; for people are not willing to attack such kind of men, but pursue those they see are in a fright." That is the testimony of this great captain, which teaches us, what we every day experience, that nothing so much throws us into dangers as an inconsiderate eagerness of getting ourselves clear of them:

"Quo timoris minus est, eo minus ferme periculi est."
"When there is least fear, there is for the most part least danger."—Livy, xxii. 5.

Our people are to blame who say that such an one is afraid of death, when they would express that he thinks of it and foresees it: foresight is equally convenient in what concerns us, whether good or ill. To consider and judge of danger is, in some sort, the reverse to being astounded. I do not find myself strong enough to sustain the force and impetuosity of this passion of fear, nor of any other vehement passion whatever: if I was once conquered and beaten down by it, I should never rise again very sound. Whoever should once make my soul lose her footing, would never set her upright again: she retastes and researches herself too profoundly, and too much to the quick, and therefore would never let the wound she had received heal and cicatrise. It has been well for me that no sickness has yet discomposed her: at every charge made upon me, I preserve my utmost opposition and defence; by which means the first that should rout me would keep me from ever rallying again. I have no after-game to play: on which side soever the inundation breaks my banks, I lie open, and am drowned without remedy. Epicurus says, that a wise man can never become a fool; I have an opinion reverse to this sentence, which is, that he who has once been a very fool, will never after be very wise. God grants me cold according to my cloth, and passions proportionable to the means I have to withstand them: nature having laid me open on the one side, has covered me on the other; having disarmed me of strength, she has armed me with insensibility and an apprehension that is regular, or, if you will, dull.

I cannot now long endure (and when I was young could much less) either coach, litter, or boat, and hate all other riding but on horseback, both in town and country. But I can bear a litter worse than a coach; and, by the same reason, a rough agitation upon the water, whence fear is produced, better than the motions of a calm. At the little jerks of oars, stealing the vessel from under us, I find, I know not how, both my head and my stomach disordered; neither can I endure to sit upon a tottering chair. When the sail or the current carries us equally, or that we are towed, the equal agitation does not disturb me at all; 'tis an interrupted motion that offends me, and most of all when most slow: I cannot otherwise express it. The physicians have ordered me to squeeze and gird myself about the bottom of the belly with a napkin to remedy this evil; which however I have not tried, being accustomed to wrestle with my own defects, and overcome them myself.

Would my memory serve me, I should not think my time ill spent in setting down here the infinite variety that history presents us of the use of chariots in the service of war: various, according to the nations and according to the age; in my opinion, of great necessity and effect; so that it is a wonder that we have lost all knowledge of them. I will only say this, that very lately, in our fathers' time, the Hungarians made very advantageous use of them against the Turks; having in every one of them a targetter and a musketeer, and a number of harquebuses piled ready and loaded, and all covered with a pavesade like a galliot—[Canvas spread along the side of a ship of war, in action to screen the movements of those on board.]—They formed the front of their battle with three thousand such coaches, and after the cannon had played, made them all pour in their shot upon the enemy, who had to swallow that volley before they tasted of the rest, which was no little advance; and that done, these chariots charged into their squadrons to break them and open a way for the rest; besides the use they might make of them to flank the soldiers in a place of danger when marching to the field, or to cover a post, and fortify it in haste. In my time, a gentleman on one of our frontiers, unwieldy of body, and finding no horse able to carry...
his weight, having a quarrel, rode through the country in a chariot of this fashion, and found
great convenience in it. But let us leave these chariots of war.

As if their effeminacy—[Which Cotton translates: "as if the insignificance of coaches." ]—had
not been sufficiently known by better proofs, the last kings of our first race travelled in a chariot
drawn by four oxen. Marc Antony was the first at Rome who caused himself to be drawn in a
coach by lions, and a singing wench with him.

[Cytheris, the Roman courtezan.—Plutarch's Life of Antony, c. 3.
This, was the same person who is introduced by Gallus under the
name of Lycoris. Gallus doubtless knew her personally.]

Heliogabalus did since as much, calling himself Cybele, the mother of the gods; and also drawn
by tigers, taking upon him the person of the god Bacchus; he also sometimes harnessed two stags
to his coach, another time four dogs, and another four naked wenches, causing himself to be
drawn by them in pomp, stark naked too. The Emperor Firmus caused his chariot to be drawn by
ostriches of a prodigious size, so that it seemed rather to fly than roll.

The strangeness of these inventions puts this other fancy in my head: that it is a kind of
puisannimity in monarchs, and a testimony that they do not sufficiently understand themselves
what they are, when they study to make themselves honoured and to appear great by excessive
expense: it were indeed excusable in a foreign country, but amongst their own subjects, where
they are in sovereign command, and may do what they please, it derogates from their dignity the
most supreme degree of honour to which they can arrive: just as, methinks, it is superfluous in a
private gentleman to go finely dressed at home; his house, his attendants, and his kitchen
sufficiently answer for him. The advice that Isocrates gives his king seems to be grounded upon
reason: that he should be splendid in plate and furniture; forasmuch as it is an expense of
duration that devolves on his successors; and that he should avoid all magnificences that will in a
short time be forgotten. I loved to go fine when I was a younger brother, for want of other
ornament; and it became me well: there are some upon whom their rich clothes weep: We have
strange stories of the frugality of our kings about their own persons and in their gifts: kings who
were great in reputation, valour, and fortune. Demosthenes vehemently opposes the law of his
city that assigned the public money for the pomp of their public plays and festivals: he would
that their greatness should be seen in numbers of ships well equipped, and good armies well
provided for; and there is good reason to condemn Theophrastus, who, in his Book on Riches,
establishes a contrary opinion, and maintains that sort of expense to be the true fruit of
abundance. They are delights, says Aristotle, that a only please the baser sort of the people, and
that vanish from the memory as soon as the people are sated with them, and for which no serious
and judicious man can have any esteem. This money would, in my opinion, be much more
royally, as more profitably, justly, and durably, laid out in ports, havens, walls, and fortifications;
in sumptuous buildings, churches, hospitals, colleges, the reforming of streets and highways:
wherein Pope Gregory XIII. will leave a laudable memory to future times: and wherein our
Queen Catherine would to long posterity manifest her natural liberality and munificence, did her
means supply her affection. Fortune has done me a great despite in interrupting the noble
structure of the Pont-Neuf of our great city, and depriving me of the hope of seeing it finished
before I die.
Moreover, it seems to subjects, who are spectators of these triumphs, that their own riches are exposed before them, and that they are entertained at their own expense: for the people are apt to presume of kings, as we do of our servants, that they are to take care to provide us all things necessary in abundance, but not touch it themselves; and therefore the Emperor Galba, being pleased with a musician who played to him at supper, called for his money-box, and gave him a handful of crowns that he took out of it, with these words: "This is not the public money, but my own." Yet it so falls out that the people, for the most part, have reason on their side, and that the princes feed their eyes with what they have need of to fill their bellies.

Liberality itself is not in its true lustre in a sovereign hand: private men have therein the most right; for, to take it exactly, a king has nothing properly his own; he owes himself to others: authority is not given in favour of the magistrate, but of the people; a superior is never made so for his own profit, but for the profit of the inferior, and a physician for the sick person, and not for himself: all magistracy, as well as all art, has its end out of itself wherefore the tutors of young princes, who make it their business to imprint in them this virtue of liberality, and preach to them to deny nothing and to think nothing so well spent as what they give (a doctrine that I have known in great credit in my time), either have more particular regard to their own profit than to that of their master, or ill understand to whom they speak. It is too easy a thing to inculcate liberality on him who has as much as he will to practise it with at the expense of others; and, the estimate not being proportioned to the measure of the gift but to the measure of the means of him who gives it, it comes to nothing in so mighty hands; they find themselves prodigal before they can be reputed liberal. And it is but a little recommendation, in comparison with other royal virtues: and the only one, as the tyrant Dionysius said, that suits well with tyranny itself. I should rather teach him this verse of the ancient labourer:

"That whoever will have a good crop must sow with his hand, and not pour out of the sack."—Plutarch, Apothegms, Whether the Ancients were more excellent in Arms than in Learning.

he must scatter it abroad, and not lay it on a heap in one place: and that, seeing he is to give, or, to say better, to pay and restore to so many people according as they have deserved, he ought to be a loyal and discreet disposer. If the liberality of a prince be without measure or discretion, I had rather he were covetous.

Royal virtue seems most to consist in justice; and of all the parts of justice that best denotes a king which accompanies liberality, for this they have particularly reserved to be performed by themselves, whereas all other sorts of justice they remit to the administration of others. An immoderate bounty is a very weak means to acquire for them good will; it checks more people than it allures:

"Quo in plures usus sis, minus in multos uti possis....
Quod autem est stultius, quam, quod liberenter facias,
curare ut id diutius facere non possis;"

"By how much more you use it to many, by so much less will you be in a capacity to use it to many more. And what greater folly can there be than to order it so that what you would willingly do, you
and if it be conferred without due respect of merit, it puts him out of countenance who receives it, and is received ungraciously. Tyrants have been sacrificed to the hatred of the people by the hands of those very men they have unjustly advanced; such kind of men as buffoons, panders, fiddlers, and such ragamuffins, thinking to assure to themselves the possession of benefits unduly received, if they manifest to have him in hatred and disdain of whom they hold them, and in this associate themselves to the common judgment and opinion.

The subjects of a prince excessive in gifts grow excessive in asking, and regulate their demands, not by reason, but by example. We have, seriously, very often reason to blush at our own impudence: we are over-paid, according to justice, when the recompense equals our service; for do we owe nothing of natural obligation to our princes? If he bear our charges, he does too much; 'tis enough that he contribute to them: the overplus is called benefit, which cannot be exacted: for the very name Liberality sounds of Liberty.

In our fashion it is never done; we never reckon what we have received; we are only for the future liberality; wherefore, the more a prince exhausts himself in giving, the poorer he grows in friends. How should he satisfy immoderate desires, that still increase as they are fulfilled? He who has his thoughts upon taking, never thinks of what he has taken; covetousness has nothing so properly and so much its own as ingratitude.

The example of Cyrus will not do amiss in this place, to serve the kings of these times for a touchstone to know whether their gifts are well or ill bestowed, and to see how much better that emperor conferred than they do, by which means they are reduced to borrow of unknown subjects, and rather of them whom they have wronged than of them on whom they have conferred their benefits, and so receive aids wherein there is nothing of gratuitous but the name. Croesus reproached him with his bounty, and cast up to how much his treasure would amount if he had been a little closer-handed. He had a mind to justify his liberality, and therefore sent despatches into all parts to the grandees of his dominions whom he had particularly advanced, entreating every one of them to supply him with as much money as they could, for a pressing occasion, and to send him particulars of what each could advance. When all these answers were brought to him, every one of his friends, not thinking it enough barely to offer him so much as he had received from his bounty, and adding to it a great deal of his own, it appeared that the sum amounted to a great deal more than Croesus' reckoning. Whereupon Cyrus: "I am not," said he, "less in love with riches than other princes, but rather a better husband; you see with how small a venture I have acquired the inestimable treasure of so many friends, and how much more faithful treasurers they are to me than mercenary men without obligation, without affection; and my money better laid up than in chests, bringing upon me the hatred, envy, and contempt of other princes."

The emperors excused the superfluity of their plays and public spectacles by reason that their authority in some sort (at least in outward appearance) depended upon the will of the people of Rome, who, time out of mind, had been accustomed to be entertained and caressed with such shows and excesses. But they were private citizens, who had nourished this custom to gratify their fellow-citizens and companions (and chiefly out of their own purses) by such profusion and magnificence it had quite another taste when the masters came to imitate it:

"Pecuniarum translatio a justis dominis ad alienos"
non debet liberalis videri."

["The transferring of money from the right owners to strangers ought not to have the title of liberality."
—Cicero, De Offic., i. 14.]

Philip, seeing that his son went about by presents to gain the affection of the Macedonians, reprimanded him in a letter after this manner: "What! hast thou a mind that thy subjects shall look upon thee as their cash-keeper and not as their king? Wilt thou tamper with them to win their affections? Do it, then, by the benefits of thy virtue, and not by those of thy chest." And yet it was, doubtless, a fine thing to bring and plant within the amphitheatre a great number of vast trees, with all their branches in their full verdure, representing a great shady forest, disposed in excellent order; and, the first day, to throw into it a thousand ostriches and a thousand stags, a thousand boars, and a thousand fallow-deer, to be killed and disposed of by the people: the next day, to cause a hundred great lions, a hundred leopards, and three hundred bears to be killed in his presence; and for the third day, to make three hundred pair of gladiators fight it out to the last, as the Emperor Probus did. It was also very fine to see those vast amphitheatres, all faced with marble without, curiously wrought with figures and statues, and within glittering with rare enrichments:

"Baltheus en! gemmis, en illita porticus auro:"

["A belt glittering with jewels, and a portico overlaid with gold."
—Calpurnius, Eclog., vii. 47. A baltheus was a shoulder-belt or baldric.]

all the sides of this vast space filled and environed, from the bottom to the top, with three or four score rows of seats, all of marble also, and covered with cushions:

"Exeat, inquit,
Si pudor est, et de pulvino surgat equestri,
Cujus res legi non sufficit;"

["Let him go out, he said, if he has any sense of shame, and rise from the equestrian cushion, whose estate does not satisfy the law."
—Juvenal, iii. 153. The Equites were required to possess a fortune of 400 sestertia, and they sat on the first fourteen rows behind the orchestra.]

where a hundred thousand men might sit at their ease: and, the place below, where the games were played, to make it, by art, first open and cleave in chasms, representing caves that vomited out the beasts designed for the spectacle; and then, secondly, to be overflowed by a deep sea, full of sea monsters, and laden with ships of war, to represent a naval battle; and, thirdly, to make it dry and even again for the combat of the gladiators; and, for the fourth scene, to have it strown with vermilion grain and storax,—[A resinous gum.]—instead of sand, there to make a solemn feast for all that infinite number of people: the last act of one only day:

"Quoties nos descendentis arenae
Vidimus in partes, ruptaque voragine terrae
Emersisse feras, et eisdem saepe latebris
Aurea cum croceo creverunt arbuta libro!....
Nec solum nobis silvestria cernere monstra
Contigit; aequoreos ego cum certantibus ursis
Spectavi vitulos, et equorum nomine dignum,
Sen deforme pecus, quod in illo nascitur amni...."

"How often have we seen the stage of the theatre descend and part asunder, and from a chasm in the earth wild beasts emerge, and then presently give birth to a grove of gilded trees, that put forth blossoms of enamelled flowers. Nor yet of sylvan marvels alone had we sight: I saw sea-calves fight with bears, and a deformed sort of cattle, we might call sea-horses."—Calpurnius, Eclog., vii. 64.

Sometimes they made a high mountain advance itself, covered with fruit-trees and other leafy trees, sending down rivulets of water from the top, as from the mouth of a fountain: otherwhiles, a great ship was seen to come rolling in, which opened and divided of itself, and after having disgorged from the hold four or five hundred beasts for fight, closed again, and vanished without help. At other times, from the floor of this place, they made spouts of perfumed water dart their streams upward, and so high as to sprinkle all that infinite multitude. To defend themselves from the injuries of the weather, they had that vast place one while covered over with purple curtains of needlework, and by-and-by with silk of one or another colour, which they drew off or on in a moment, as they had a mind:

"Quamvis non modico caleant spectacula sole,
Vela reducuntur, cum venit Hermogenes."

"The curtains, though the sun should scorch the spectators, are drawn in, when Hermogenes appears."—Martial, xii. 29, 15. M. Tigellius Hermogenes, whom Horace and others have satirised. One editor calls him "a noted thief," another: "He was a literary amateur of no ability, who expressed his critical opinions with too great a freedom to please the poets of his day." D.W.

The network also that was set before the people to defend them from the violence of these turned-out beasts was woven of gold:

"Auro quoque torts refulgent
Retia."

"The woven nets are refulgent with gold."
—Calpurnius, ubi supra.

If there be anything excusable in such excesses as these, it is where the novelty and invention create more wonder than the expense; even in these vanities we discover how fertile those ages
were in other kind of wits than these of ours. It is with this sort of fertility, as with all other products of nature: not that she there and then employed her utmost force: we do not go; we rather run up and down, and whirl this way and that; we turn back the way we came. I am afraid our knowledge is weak in all senses; we neither see far forward nor far backward; our understanding comprehends little, and lives but a little while; 'tis short both in extent of time and extent of matter:

"Vixere fortes ante Agamemnona
Mufti, sed omnes illacrymabiles
Urgentur, ignotique longus
Nocte."

[ Many brave men lived before Agamemnon, but all are pressed by the long night unmourned and unknown."—Horace, Od., iv. 9, 25.]

"Et supra bellum Thebanum et funera Troiae
Non alias alii quoque res cecinere poetae?"

["Why before the Theban war and the destruction of Troy, have not other poets sung other events?"—Lucretius, v. 327. Montaigne here diverts himself in giving Lucretius' words a construction directly contrary to what they bear in the poem. Lucretius puts the question, Why if the earth had existed from all eternity, there had not been poets, before the Theban war, to sing men's exploits. —Coste.]

And the narrative of Solon, of what he had learned from the Egyptian priests, touching the long life of their state, and their manner of learning and preserving foreign histories, is not, methinks, a testimony to be refused in this consideration:

"Si interminatam in omnes partes magnitudinem regionum videremus et temporum, in quam se injiciens animus et intendens, ita late longeque peregrinatur, ut nullam oram ultimi videat, in qua possit insistere: in haec immensitate . . . infinita vis innumerabilium appareret fomorum."

["Could we see on all parts the unlimited magnitude of regions and of times, upon which the mind being intent, could wander so far and wide, that no limit is to be seen, in which it can bound its eye, we should, in that infinite immensity, discover an infinite force of innumerable atoms." Here also Montaigne puts a sense quite different from what the words bear in the original; but the application he makes of them is so happy that one would declare they were actually put together only to express his own sentiments. "Et
temporum* is an addition by Montaigne.—Coste.]

Though all that has arrived, by report, of our knowledge of times past should be true, and known by some one person, it would be less than nothing in comparison of what is unknown. And of this same image of the world, which glides away whilst we live upon it, how wretched and limited is the knowledge of the most curious; not only of particular events, which fortune often renders exemplary and of great concern, but of the state of great governments and nations, a hundred more escape us than ever come to our knowledge. We make a mighty business of the invention of artillery and printing, which other men at the other end of the world, in China, had a thousand years ago. Did we but see as much of the world as we do not see, we should perceive, we may well believe, a perpetual multiplication and vicissitude of forms. There is nothing single and rare in respect of nature, but in respect of our knowledge, which is a wretched foundation whereon to ground our rules, and that represents to us a very false image of things. As we nowadays vainly conclude the declension and decrepitude of the world, by the arguments we extract from our own weakness and decay:

"Jamque adeo est affecta aetas effoet aque tellus;"

["Our age is feeble, and the earth less fertile."
—Lucretius, ii. 1151.]

so did he vainly conclude as to its birth and youth, by the vigour he observed in the wits of his time, abounding in novelties and the invention of divers arts:

"Verum, ut opinor, habet novitatem summa,
Natura est mundi, neque pridem exordia coepit
Quare etiam quaedam nunc artes expoliuntur,
Nunc etiam augescunt; nunc addita navigiis sunt
Multa."

["But, as I am of opinion, the whole of the world is of recent origin, nor had its commencement in remote times; wherefore it is that some arts are still being refined, and some just on the increase; at present many additions are being made to shipping."
—Lucretius, v. 331.]

Our world has lately discovered another (and who will assure us that it is the last of its brothers, since the Daemons, the Sybils, and we ourselves have been ignorant of this till now?), as large, well-peopled, and fruitful as this whereon we live and yet so raw and childish, that we are still teaching it it's a B C: 'tis not above fifty years since it knew neither letters, weights, measures, vestments, corn, nor vines: it was then quite naked in the mother's lap, and only lived upon what she gave it. If we rightly conclude of our end, and this poet of the youthfulness of that age of his, that other world will only enter into the light when this of ours shall make its exit; the universe will fall into paralysis; one member will be useless, the other in vigour. I am very much afraid that we have greatly precipitated its declension and ruin by our contagion; and that we have sold it opinions and our arts at a very dear rate. It was an infant world, and yet we have not whipped and subjected it to our discipline by the advantage of our natural worth and force, neither have we won it by our justice and goodness, nor subdued it by our magnanimity. Most of their
answers, and the negotiations we have had with them, witness that they were nothing behind us in pertinency and clearness of natural understanding. The astonishing magnificence of the cities of Cusco and Mexico, and, amongst many other things, the garden of the king, where all the trees, fruits, and plants, according to the order and stature they have in a garden, were excellently formed in gold; as, in his cabinet, were all the animals bred upon his territory and in its seas; and the beauty of their manufactures, in jewels, feathers, cotton, and painting, gave ample proof that they were as little inferior to us in industry. But as to what concerns devotion, observance of the laws, goodness, liberality, loyalty, and plain dealing, it was of use to us that we had not so much as they; for they have lost, sold, and betrayed themselves by this advantage over us.

As to boldness and courage, stability, constancy against pain, hunger, and death, I should not fear to oppose the examples I find amongst them to the most famous examples of elder times that we find in our records on this side of the world. Far as to those who subdued them, take but away the tricks and artifices they practised to gull them, and the just astonishment it was to those nations to see so sudden and unexpected an arrival of men with beards, differing in language, religion, shape, and countenance, from so remote a part of the world, and where they had never heard there was any habitation, mounted upon great unknown monsters, against those who had not only never seen a horse, but had never seen any other beast trained up to carry a man or any other loading; shelled in a hard and shining skin, with a cutting and glittering weapon in his hand, against them, who, out of wonder at the brightness of a looking glass or a knife, would exchange great treasures of gold and pearl; and who had neither knowledge, nor matter with which, at leisure, they could penetrate our steel: to which may be added the lightning and thunder of our cannon and harquebuses, enough to frighten Caesar himself, if surprised, with so little experience, against people naked, except where the invention of a little quilted cotton was in use, without other arms, at the most, than bows, stones, staves, and bucklers of wood; people surprised under colour of friendship and good faith, by the curiosity of seeing strange and unknown things; take but away, I say, this disparity from the conquerors, and you take away all the occasion of so many victories. When I look upon that in vincible ardour wherewith so many thousands of men, women, and children so often presented and threw themselves into inevitable dangers for the defence of their gods and liberties; that generous obstinacy to suffer all extremities and difficulties, and death itself, rather than submit to the dominion of those by whom they had been so shamefully abused; and some of them choosing to die of hunger and fasting, being prisoners, rather than to accept of nourishment from the hands of their so basely victorious enemies: I see, that whoever would have attacked them upon equal terms of arms, experience, and number, would have had a hard, and, peradventure, a harder game to play than in any other war we have seen.

Why did not so noble a conquest fall under Alexander, or the ancient Greeks and Romans; and so great a revolution and mutation of so many empires and nations, fall into hands that would have gently levelled, rooted up, and made plain and smooth whatever was rough and savage amongst them, and that would have cherished and propagated the good seeds that nature had there produced; mixing not only with the culture of land and the ornament of cities, the arts of this part of the world, in what was necessary, but also the Greek and Roman virtues, with those that were original of the country? What a reparation had it been to them, and what a general good to the whole world, had our first examples and deportments in those parts allured those people to the admiration and imitation of virtue, and had begotten betwixt them and us a fraternal society and intelligence? How easy had it been to have made advantage of souls so innocent, and so eager to
learn, leaving, for the most part, naturally so good inclinations before? Whereas, on the contrary, we have taken advantage of their ignorance and inexperience, with greater ease to incline them to treachery, luxury, avarice, and towards all sorts of inhumanity and cruelty, by the pattern and example of our manners. Who ever enhanced the price of merchandise at such a rate? So many cities levelled with the ground, so many nations exterminated, so many millions of people fallen by the edge of the sword, and the richest and most beautiful part of the world turned upside down, for the traffic of pearl and pepper? Mechanic victories! Never did ambition, never did public animosities, engage men against one another in such miserable hostilities, in such miserable calamities.

Certain Spaniards, coasting the sea in quest of their mines, landed in a fruitful and pleasant and very well peopled country, and there made to the inhabitants their accustomed professions: "that they were peaceable men, who were come from a very remote country, and sent on the behalf of the King of Castile, the greatest prince of the habitable world, to whom the Pope, God's vicegerent upon earth, had given the principality of all the Indies; that if they would become tributaries to him, they should be very gently and courteously used"; at the same time requiring of them victuals for their nourishment, and gold whereof to make some pretended medicine; setting forth, moreover, the belief in one only God, and the truth of our religion, which they advised them to embrace, whereunto they also added some threats. To which they received this answer: "That as to their being peaceable, they did not seem to be such, if they were so. As to their king, since he was fain to beg, he must be necessitous and poor; and he who had made him this gift, must be a man who loved dissension, to give that to another which was none of his own, to bring it into dispute against the ancient possessors. As to victuals, they would supply them; that of gold they had little; it being a thing they had in very small esteem, as of no use to the service of life, whereas their only care was to pass it over happily and pleasantly: but that what they could find excepting what was employed in the service of their gods, they might freely take. As to one only God, the proposition had pleased them well; but that they would not change their religion, both because they had so long and happily lived in it, and that they were not wont to take advice of any but their friends, and those they knew: as to their menaces, it was a sign of want of judgment to threaten those whose nature and power were to them unknown; that, therefore, they were to make haste to quit their coast, for they were not used to take the civilities and professions of armed men and strangers in good part; otherwise they should do by them as they had done by those others," showing them the heads of several executed men round the walls of their city. A fair example of the babble of these children. But so it is, that the Spaniards did not, either in this or in several other places, where they did not find the merchandise they sought, make any stay or attempt, whatever other conveniences were there to be had; witness my CANNIBALS. —[Chapter XXX. of Book I.]

Of the two most puissant monarchs of that world, and, peradventure, of this, kings of so many kings, and the last they turned out, he of Peru, having been taken in a battle, and put to so excessive a ransom as exceeds all belief, and it being faithfully paid, and he having, by his conversation, given manifest signs of a frank, liberal, and constant spirit, and of a clear and settled understanding, the conquerors had a mind, after having exacted one million three hundred and twenty-five thousand and five hundred weight of gold, besides silver, and other things which amounted to no less (so that their horses were shod with massy gold), still to see, at the price of what disloyalty and injustice whatever, what the remainder of the treasures of this king might be, and to possess themselves of that also. To this end a false accusation was preferred against him,
and false witnesses brought to prove that he went about to raise an insurrection in his provinces, to procure his own liberty; whereupon, by the virtuous sentence of those very men who had by this treachery conspired his ruin, he was condemned to be publicly hanged and strangled, after having made him buy off the torment of being burnt alive, by the baptism they gave him immediately before execution; a horrid and unheard of barbarity, which, nevertheless, he underwent without giving way either in word or look, with a truly grave and royal behaviour. After which, to calm and appease the people, aroused and astounded at so strange a thing, they counterfeited great sorrow for his death, and appointed most sumptuous funerals.

The other king of Mexico,—[Guatimosin]—having for a long time defended his beleaguered city, and having in this siege manifested the utmost of what suffering and perseverance can do, if ever prince and people did, and his misfortune having delivered him alive into his enemies' hands, upon articles of being treated like a king, neither did he in his captivity discover anything unworthy of that title. His enemies, after their victory, not finding so much gold as they expected, when they had searched and rifled with their utmost diligence, they went about to procure discoveries by the most cruel tortures they could invent upon the prisoners they had taken: but having profited nothing by these, their courage being greater than their tortures, they arrived at last to such a degree of fury, as, contrary to their faith and the law of nations, to condemn the king himself, and one of the principal noblemen of his court, to the rack, in the presence of one another. This lord, finding himself overcome with pain, being environed with burning coals, pitifully turned his dying eyes towards his master, as it were to ask him pardon that he was able to endure no more; whereupon the king, darting at him a fierce and severe look, as reproaching his cowardice and pusillanimity, with a harsh and constant voice said to him thus only: "And what dost thou think I suffer? am I in a bath? am I more at ease than thou?" Whereupon the other immediately quailed under the torment and died upon the spot. The king, half roasted, was carried thence; not so much out of pity (for what compassion ever touched so barbarous souls, who, upon the doubtful information of some vessel of gold to be made a prey of, caused not only a man, but a king, so great in fortune and desert, to be broiled before their eyes), but because his constancy rendered their cruelty still more shameful. They afterwards hanged him for having nobly attempted to deliver himself by arms from so long a captivity and subjection, and he died with a courage becoming so magnanimous a prince.

Another time, they burnt in the same fire four hundred and sixty men alive at once, the four hundred of the common people, the sixty the principal lords of a province, simply prisoners of war. We have these narratives from themselves for they not only own it, but boast of it and publish it. Could it be for a testimony of their justice or their zeal to religion? Doubtless these are ways too differing and contrary to so holy an end. Had they proposed to themselves to extend our faith, they would have considered that it does not amplify in the possession of territories, but in the gaining of men; and would have more than satisfied themselves with the slaughters occasioned by the necessity of war, without indifferently mixing a massacre, as upon wild beasts, as universal as fire and sword could make it; having only, by intention, saved so many as they meant to make miserable slaves of; for the work and service of their mines; so that many of the captains were put to death upon the place of conquest, by order of the kings of Castile, justly offended with the horror of their deportment, and almost all of them hated and disesteemed. God meritoriously permitted that all this great plunder should be swallowed up by the sea in transportation, or in the civil wars wherewith they devoured one another; and most of the men themselves were buried in a foreign land without any fruit of their victory.
That the revenue from these countries, though in the hands of so parsimonious and so prudent a prince,—[Phillip II.]—so little answers the expectation given of it to his predecessors, and to that original abundance of riches which was found at the first landing in those new discovered countries (for though a great deal be fetched thence, yet we see 'tis nothing in comparison of that which might be expected), is that the use of coin was there utterly unknown, and that consequently their gold was found all hoarded together, being of no other use but for ornament and show, as a furniture reserved from father to son by many puissant kings, who were ever draining their mines to make this vast heap of vessels and statues for the decoration of their palaces and temples; whereas our gold is always in motion and traffic; we cut it into a thousand small pieces, and cast it into a thousand forms, and scatter and disperse it in a thousand ways. But suppose our kings should thus hoard up all the gold they could get in several ages and let it lie idle by them.

Those of the kingdom of Mexico were in some sort more civilised and more advanced in arts than the other nations about them. Therefore did they judge, as we do, that the world was near its period, and looked upon the desolation we brought amongst them as a certain sign of it. They believed that the existence of the world was divided into five ages, and in the life of five successive suns, of which four had already ended their time, and that this which gave them light was the fifth. The first perished, with all other creatures, by an universal inundation of water; the second by the heavens falling upon us and suffocating every living thing to which age they assigned the giants, and showed bones to the Spaniards, according to the proportion of which the stature of men amounted to twenty feet; the third by fire, which burned and consumed all; the fourth by an emotion of the air and wind, which came with such violence as to beat down even many mountains, wherein the men died not, but were turned into baboons. What impressions will not the weakness of human belief admit? After the death of this fourth sun, the world was twenty-five years in perpetual darkness: in the fifteenth of which a man and a woman were created, who restored the human race: ten years after, upon a certain day, the sun appeared newly created, and since the account of their year takes beginning from that day: the third day after its creation the ancient gods died, and the new ones were since born daily. After what manner they think this last sun shall perish, my author knows not; but their number of this fourth change agrees with the great conjunction of stars which eight hundred and odd years ago, as astrologers suppose, produced great alterations and novelties in the world.

As to pomp and magnificence, upon the account of which I engaged in this discourse, neither Greece, Rome, nor Egypt, whether for utility, difficulty, or state, can compare any of their works with the highway to be seen in Peru, made by the kings of the country, from the city of Quito to that of Cusco (three hundred leagues), straight, even, five-and-twenty paces wide, paved, and provided on both sides with high and beautiful walls; and close by them, and all along on the inside, two perennial streams, bordered with beautiful plants, which they call moly. In this work, where they met with rocks and mountains, they cut them through, and made them even, and filled up pits and valleys with lime and stone to make them level. At the end of every day's journey are beautiful palaces, furnished with provisions, vestments, and arms, as well for travellers as for the armies that are to pass that way. In the estimate of this work I have reckoned the difficulty which is especially considerable in that place; they did not build with any stones less than ten feet square, and had no other conveniency of carriage but by drawing their load themselves by force of arm, and knew not so much as the art of scaffolding, nor any other way of
standing to their work, but by throwing up earth against the building as it rose higher, taking it away again when they had done.

Let us here return to our coaches. Instead of these, and of all other sorts of carriages, they caused themselves to be carried upon men's shoulders. This last king of Peru, the day that he was taken, was thus carried betwixt two upon staves of gold, and set in a chair of gold in the middle of his army. As many of these sedan-men as were killed to make him fall (for they would take him alive), so many others (and they contended for it) took the place of those who were slain, so that they could never beat him down, what slaughter soever they made of these people, till a horseman, seizing upon him, brought him to the ground.

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