

# FRANCIS BACON

THE ESSAYS OR  
COUNSELS, CIVIL AND  
MORAL

Francis Bacon

**The Essays or Counsels,  
Civil and Moral**

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# Francis Bacon

## The Essays or Counsels, Civil and Moral

### Of Truth

WHAT is truth? said jesting Pilate, and would not stay for an answer. Certainly there be, that delight in giddiness, and count it a bondage to fix a belief; affecting free-will in thinking, as well as in acting. And though the sects of philosophers of that kind be gone, yet there remain certain discoursing wits, which are of the same veins, though there be not so much blood in them, as was in those of the ancients. But it is not only the difficulty and labor, which men take in finding out of truth, nor again, that when it is found, it imposeth upon men's thoughts, that doth bring lies in favor; but a natural, though corrupt love, of the lie itself. One of the later school of the Grecians, examineth the matter, and is at a stand, to think what should be in it, that men should love lies; where neither they make for pleasure, as with poets, nor for advantage, as with the merchant; but for the lie's sake. But I cannot tell; this same truth, is a naked, and open day-light, that doth not show the masks, and mummeries, and triumphs, of the world, half so stately and daintily as candle-lights. Truth may perhaps come to the price of a pearl, that showeth best by day; but it will not rise to the price of a diamond, or carbuncle, that showeth best in varied lights. A mixture of a lie doth ever add pleasure. Doth any man doubt, that if there were taken out of men's minds, vain opinions, flattering hopes, false valuations, imaginations as one would, and the like, but it would leave the minds, of a number of men, poor shrunken things, full of melancholy and indisposition, and unpleasing to themselves?

One of the fathers, in great severity, called poesy *vinum daemonum*, because it fireth the imagination; and yet, it is but with the shadow of a lie. But it is not the lie that passeth through the mind, but the lie that sinketh in, and setteth in it, that doth the hurt; such as we spake of before. But howsoever these things are thus in men's depraved judgments, and affections, yet truth, which only doth judge itself, teacheth that the inquiry of truth, which is the love-making, or wooing of it, the knowledge of truth, which is the presence of it, and the belief of truth, which is the enjoying of it, is the sovereign good of human nature. The first creature of God, in the works of the days, was the light of the sense; the last, was the light of reason; and his sabbath work ever since, is the illumination of his Spirit. First he breathed light, upon the face of the matter or chaos; then he breathed light, into the face of man; and still he breatheth and inspireth light, into the face of his chosen. The poet, that beautified the sect, that was otherwise inferior to the rest, saith yet excellently well: It is a pleasure, to stand upon the shore, and to see ships tossed upon the sea; a pleasure, to stand in the window of a castle, and to see a battle, and the adventures thereof below: but no pleasure is comparable to the standing upon the vantage ground of truth (a hill not to be commanded, and where the air is always clear and serene), and to see the errors, and wanderings, and mists, and tempests, in the vale below; so always that this prospect be with pity, and not with swelling, or pride. Certainly, it is heaven upon earth, to have a man's mind move in charity, rest in providence, and turn upon the poles of truth.

To pass from theological, and philosophical truth, to the truth of civil business; it will be acknowledged, even by those that practise it not, that clear, and round dealing, is the honor of man's nature; and that mixture of falsehoods, is like alloy in coin of gold and silver, which may make the metal work the better, but it embaseth it. For these winding, and crooked courses, are the goings of the serpent; which goeth basely upon the belly, and not upon the feet. There is no vice, that doth so cover a man with shame, as to be found false and perfidious. And therefore Montaigne saith prettily, when he inquired the reason, why the word of the lie should be such a disgrace, and such an odious charge? Saith he, If it be well weighed, to say that a man lieth, is as much to say, as that he is brave towards God, and a coward towards men. For a lie faces God, and shrinks from man. Surely the

wickedness of falsehood, and breach of faith, cannot possibly be so highly expressed, as in that it shall be the last peal, to call the judgments of God upon the generations of men; it being foretold, that when Christ cometh, he shall not find faith upon the earth.

## Of Death

MEN fear death, as children fear to go in the dark; and as that natural fear in children, is increased with tales, so is the other. Certainly, the contemplation of death, as the wages of sin, and passage to another world, is holy and religious; but the fear of it, as a tribute due unto nature, is weak. Yet in religious meditations, there is sometimes mixture of vanity, and of superstition. You shall read, in some of the friars' books of mortification, that a man should think with himself, what the pain is, if he have but his finger's end pressed, or tortured, and thereby imagine, what the pains of death are, when the whole body is corrupted, and dissolved; when many times death passeth, with less pain than the torture of a limb; for the most vital parts, are not the quickest of sense. And by him that spake only as a philosopher, and natural man, it was well said, *Pompa mortis magis terret, quam mors ipsa*. Groans, and convulsions, and a discolored face, and friends weeping, and blacks, and obsequies, and the like, show death terrible. It is worthy the observing, that there is no passion in the mind of man, so weak, but it mates, and masters, the fear of death; and therefore, death is no such terrible enemy, when a man hath so many attendants about him, that can win the combat of him. Revenge triumphs over death; love slights it; honor aspireth to it; grief flieth to it; fear preoccupateth it; nay, we read, after Otho the emperor had slain himself, pity (which is the tenderest of affections) provoked many to die, out of mere compassion to their sovereign, and as the truest sort of followers. Nay, Seneca adds niceness and satiety: *Cogita quamdiu eadem feceris; mori velle, non tantum fortis aut miser, sed etiam fastidiosus potest*. A man would die, though he were neither valiant, nor miserable, only upon a weariness to do the same thing so oft, over and over. It is no less worthy, to observe, how little alteration in good spirits, the approaches of death make; for they appear to be the same men, till the last instant. Augustus Caesar died in a compliment; *Livia, conjugii nostri memor, vive et vale*. Tiberius in dissimulation; as Tacitus saith of him, *Jam Tiberium vires et corpus, non dissimulatio, deserebant*. Vespasian in a jest, sitting upon the stool; *Ut puto deus fio*. Galba with a sentence; *Feri, si ex re sit populi Romani*; holding forth his neck. Septimius Severus in despatch; *Adeste si quid mihi restat agendum*. And the like. Certainly the Stoics bestowed too much cost upon death, and by their great preparations, made it appear more fearful. Better saith he, *qui finem vitae extremum inter munera ponat naturae*. It is as natural to die, as to be born; and to a little infant, perhaps, the one is as painful, as the other. He that dies in an earnest pursuit, is like one that is wounded in hot blood; who, for the time, scarce feels the hurt; and therefore a mind fixed, and bent upon somewhat that is good, doth avert the dolours of death. But, above all, believe it, the sweetest canticle is', *Nunc dimittis*; when a man hath obtained worthy ends, and expectations. Death hath this also; that it openeth the gate to good fame, and extinguisheth envy.—*Extinctus amabitur idem*.

## Of Unity In Religion

RELIGION being the chief band of human society, it is a happy thing, when itself is well contained within the true band of unity. The quarrels, and divisions about religion, were evils unknown to the heathen. The reason was, because the religion of the heathen, consisted rather in rites and ceremonies, than in any constant belief. For you may imagine, what kind of faith theirs was, when the chief doctors, and fathers of their church, were the poets. But the true God hath this attribute, that he is a jealous God; and therefore, his worship and religion, will endure no mixture, nor partner. We shall therefore speak a few words, concerning the unity of the church; what are the fruits thereof; what the bounds; and what the means.

The fruits of unity (next unto the well pleasing of God, which is all in all) are two: the one, towards those that are without the church, the other, towards those that are within. For the former; it is certain, that heresies, and schisms, are of all others the greatest scandals; yea, more than corruption of manners. For as in the natural body, a wound, or solution of continuity, is worse than a corrupt humor; so in the spiritual. So that nothing, doth so much keep men out of the church, and drive men out of the church, as breach of unity. And therefore, whensoever it cometh to that pass, that one saith, *Ecce in deserto*, another saith, *Ecce in penetralibus*; that is, when some men seek Christ, in the conventicles of heretics, and others, in an outward face of a church, that voice had need continually to sound in men's ears, *Nolite exire*,—Go not out. The doctor of the Gentiles (the propriety of whose vocation, drew him to have a special care of those without) saith, if an heathen come in, and hear you speak with several tongues, will he not say that you are mad? And certainly it is little better, when atheists, and profane persons, do hear of so many discordant, and contrary opinions in religion; it doth avert them from the church, and maketh them, to sit down in the chair of the scorers. It is but a light thing, to be vouched in so serious a matter, but yet it expresseth well the deformity. There is a master of scoffing, that in his catalogue of books of a feigned library, sets down this title of a book, *The Morris-Dance of Heretics*. For indeed, every sect of them, hath a diverse posture, or cringe by themselves, which cannot but move derision in worldlings, and depraved politics, who are apt to contemn holy things.

As for the fruit towards those that are within; it is peace; which containeth infinite blessings. It establisheth faith; it kindleth charity; the outward peace of the church, distilleth into peace of conscience; and it turneth the labors of writing, and reading of controversies, into treaties of mortification and devotion.

Concerning the bounds of unity; the true placing of them, importeth exceedingly. There appear to be two extremes. For to certain zealants, all speech of pacification is odious. Is it peace, *Jehu*? What hast thou to do with peace? turn thee behind me. Peace is not the matter, but following, and party. Contrariwise, certain *Laodiceans*, and lukewarm persons, think they may accommodate points of religion, by middle way, and taking part of both, and witty reconcilements; as if they would make an arbitrament between God and man. Both these extremes are to be avoided; which will be done, if the league of Christians, penned by our Savior himself, were in two cross clauses thereof, soundly and plainly expounded: He that is not with us, is against us; and again, He that is not against us, is with us; that is, if the points fundamental and of substance in religion, were truly discerned and distinguished, from points not merely of faith, but of opinion, order, or good intention. This is a thing may seem to many a matter trivial, and done already. But if it were done less partially, it would be embraced more generally.

Of this I may give only this advice, according to my small model. Men ought to take heed, of rending God's church, by two kinds of controversies. The one is, when the matter of the point controverted, is too small and light, not worth the heat and strife about it, kindled only by contradiction. For, as it is noted, by one of the fathers, Christ's coat indeed had no seam, but the

church's vesture was of divers colors; whereupon he saith, *In veste varietas sit, scissura non sit*; they be two things, unity and uniformity. The other is, when the matter of the point controverted, is great, but it is driven to an over-great subtilty, and obscurity; so that it becometh a thing rather ingenious, than substantial. A man that is of judgment and understanding, shall sometimes hear ignorant men differ, and know well within himself, that those which so differ, mean one thing, and yet they themselves would never agree. And if it come so to pass, in that distance of judgment, which is between man and man, shall we not think that God above, that knows the heart, doth not discern that frail men, in some of their contradictions, intend the same thing; and accepteth of both? The nature of such controversies is excellently expressed, by St. Paul, in the warning and precept, that he giveth concerning the same, *Devita profanas vocum novitates, et oppositiones falsi nominis scientiae*. Men create oppositions, which are not; and put them into new terms, so fixed, as whereas the meaning ought to govern the term, the term in effect governeth the meaning. There be also two false peaces, or unities: the one, when the peace is grounded, but upon an implicit ignorance; for all colors will agree in the dark: the other, when it is pieced up, upon a direct admission of contraries, in fundamental points. For truth and falsehood, in such things, are like the iron and clay, in the toes of Nebuchadnezzar's image; they may cleave, but they will not incorporate.

Concerning the means of procuring unity; men must beware, that in the procuring, or reuniting, of religious unity, they do not dissolve and deface the laws of charity, and of human society. There be two swords amongst Christians, the spiritual and temporal; and both have their due office and place, in the maintenance of religion. But we may not take up the third sword, which is Mahomet's sword, or like unto it; that is, to propagate religion by wars, or by sanguinary persecutions to force consciences; except it be in cases of overt scandal, blasphemy, or intermixture of practice against the state; much less to nourish seditions; to authorize conspiracies and rebellions; to put the sword into the people's hands; and the like; tending to the subversion of all government, which is the ordinance of God. For this is but to dash the first table against the second; and so to consider men as Christians, as we forget that they are men. Lucretius the poet, when he beheld the act of Agamemnon, that could endure the sacrificing of his own daughter, exclaimed: *Tantum Religio potuit suadere malorum*.

What would he have said, if he had known of the massacre in France, or the powder treason of England? He would have been seven times more Epicure, and atheist, than he was. For as the temporal sword is to be drawn with great circumspection in cases of religion; so it is a thing monstrous to put it into the hands of the common people. Let that be left unto the Anabaptists, and other furies. It was great blasphemy, when the devil said, *I will ascend, and be like the highest*; but it is greater blasphemy, to personate God, and bring him in saying, *I will descend, and be like the prince of darkness*; and what is it better, to make the cause of religion to descend, to the cruel and execrable actions of murdering princes, butchery of people, and subversion of states and governments? Surely this is to bring down the Holy Ghost, instead of the likeness of a dove, in the shape of a vulture or raven; and set, out of the bark of a Christian church, a flag of a bark of pirates, and assassins. Therefore it is most necessary, that the church, by doctrine and decree, princes by their sword, and all learnings, both Christian and moral, as by their Mercury rod, do damn and send to hell for ever, those facts and opinions tending to the support of the same; as hath been already in good part done. Surely in counsels concerning religion, that counsel of the apostle would be prefixed, *Ira hominis non implet justitiam Dei*. And it was a notable observation of a wise father, and no less ingenuously confessed; that those which held and persuaded pressure of consciences, were commonly interested therein, themselves, for their own ends.

## Of Revenge

REVENGE is a kind of wild justice; which the more man's nature runs to, the more ought law to weed it out. For as for the first wrong, it doth but offend the law; but the revenge of that wrong, putteth the law out of office. Certainly, in taking revenge, a man is but even with his enemy; but in passing it over, he is superior; for it is a prince's part to pardon. And Solomon, I am sure, saith, It is the glory of a man, to pass by an offence. That which is past is gone, and irrevocable; and wise men have enough to do, with things present and to come; therefore they do but trifle with themselves, that labor in past matters. There is no man doth a wrong, for the wrong's sake; but thereby to purchase himself profit, or pleasure, or honor, or the like. Therefore why should I be angry with a man, for loving himself better than me? And if any man should do wrong, merely out of ill-nature, why, yet it is but like the thorn or briar, which prick and scratch, because they can do no other. The most tolerable sort of revenge, is for those wrongs which there is no law to remedy; but then let a man take heed, the revenge be such as there is no law to punish; else a man's enemy is still before hand, and it is two for one. Some, when they take revenge, are desirous, the party should know, whence it cometh. This is the more generous. For the delight seemeth to be, not so much in doing the hurt, as in making the party repent. But base and crafty cowards, are like the arrow that flieth in the dark. Cosmus, duke of Florence, had a desperate saying against perfidious or neglecting friends, as if those wrongs were unpardonable; You shall read (saith he) that we are commanded to forgive our enemies; but you never read, that we are commanded to forgive our friends. But yet the spirit of Job was in a better tune: Shall we (saith he) take good at God's hands, and not be content to take evil also? And so of friends in a proportion. This is certain, that a man that studieth revenge, keeps his own wounds green, which otherwise would heal, and do well. Public revenges are for the most part fortunate; as that for the death of Caesar; for the death of Pertinax; for the death of Henry the Third of France; and many more. But in private revenges, it is not so. Nay rather, vindictive persons live the life of witches; who, as they are mischievous, so end they infortunate.

## Of Adversity

IT WAS an high speech of Seneca (after the manner of the Stoics), that the good things, which belong to prosperity, are to be wished; but the good things, that belong to adversity, are to be admired. *Bona rerum secundarum optabilia; adversarum mirabilia.* Certainly if miracles be the command over nature, they appear most in adversity. It is yet a higher speech of his, than the other (much too high for a heathen), It is true greatness, to have in one the frailty of a man, and the security of a God. *Vere magnum habere fragilitatem hominis, securitatem Dei.* This would have done better in poesy, where transcendences are more allowed. And the poets indeed have been busy with it; for it is in effect the thing, which figured in that strange fiction of the ancient poets, which seemeth not to be without mystery; nay, and to have some approach to the state of a Christian; that Hercules, when he went to unbind Prometheus (by whom human nature is represented), sailed the length of the great ocean, in an earthen pot or pitcher; lively describing Christian resolution, that saileth in the frail bark of the flesh, through the waves of the world. But to speak in a mean. The virtue of prosperity, is temperance; the virtue of adversity, is fortitude; which in morals is the more heroical virtue. Prosperity is the blessing of the Old Testament; adversity is the blessing of the New; which carrieth the greater benediction, and the clearer revelation of God's favor. Yet even in the Old Testament, if you listen to David's harp, you shall hear as many hearse-like airs as carols; and the pencil of the Holy Ghost hath labored more in describing the afflictions of Job, than the felicities of Solomon. Prosperity is not without many fears and distastes; and adversity is not without comforts and hopes. We see in needle-works and embroideries, it is more pleasing to have a lively work, upon a sad and solemn ground, than to have a dark and melancholy work, upon a lightsome ground: judge therefore of the pleasure of the heart, by the pleasure of the eye. Certainly virtue is like precious odors, most fragrant when they are incensed, or crushed: for prosperity doth best discover vice, but adversity doth best discover virtue.

## Of Simulation And Dissimulation

DISSIMULATION is but a faint kind of policy, or wisdom; for it asketh a strong wit, and a strong heart, to know when to tell truth, and to do it. Therefore it is the weaker sort of politics, that are the great dissemblers.

Tacitus saith, Livia sorted well with the arts of her husband, and dissimulation of her son; attributing arts or policy to Augustus, and dissimulation to Tiberius. And again, when Mucianus encourageth Vespasian, to take arms against Vitellius, he saith, We rise not against the piercing judgment of Augustus, nor the extreme caution or closeness of Tiberius. These properties, of arts or policy, and dissimulation or closeness, are indeed habits and faculties several, and to be distinguished. For if a man have that penetration of judgment, as he can discern what things are to be laid open, and what to be secreted, and what to be showed at half lights, and to whom and when (which indeed are arts of state, and arts of life, as Tacitus well calleth them), to him, a habit of dissimulation is a hinderance and a poorness. But if a man cannot obtain to that judgment, then it is left to him generally, to be close, and a dissembler. For where a man cannot choose, or vary in particulars, there it is good to take the safest, and wariest way, in general; like the going softly, by one that cannot well see. Certainly the ablest men that ever were, have had all an openness, and frankness, of dealing; and a name of certainty and veracity; but then they were like horses well managed; for they could tell passing well, when to stop or turn; and at such times, when they thought the case indeed required dissimulation, if then they used it, it came to pass that the former opinion, spread abroad, of their good faith and clearness of dealing, made them almost invisible.

There be three degrees of this hiding and veiling of a man's self. The first, closeness, reservation, and secrecy; when a man leaveth himself without observation, or without hold to be taken, what he is. The second, dissimulation, in the negative; when a man lets fall signs and arguments, that he is not, that he is. And the third, simulation, in the affirmative; when a man industriously and expressly feigns and pretends to be, that he is not.

For the first of these, secrecy; it is indeed the virtue of a confessor. And assuredly, the secret man heareth many confessions. For who will open himself, to a blab or a babbler? But if a man be thought secret, it inviteth discovery; as the more close air sucketh in the more open; and as in confession, the revealing is not for worldly use, but for the ease of a man's heart, so secret men come to the knowledge of many things in that kind; while men rather discharge their minds, than impart their minds. In few words, mysteries are due to secrecy. Besides (to say truth) nakedness is uncomely, as well in mind as body; and it addeth no small reverence, to men's manners and actions, if they be not altogether open. As for talkers and futile persons, they are commonly vain and credulous withal. For he that talketh what he knoweth, will also talk what he knoweth not. Therefore set it down, that an habit of secrecy, is both politic and moral. And in this part, it is good that a man's face give his tongue leave to speak. For the discovery of a man's self, by the tracts of his countenance, is a great weakness and betraying; by how much it is many times more marked, and believed, than a man's words.

For the second, which is dissimulation; it followeth many times upon secrecy, by a necessity; so that he that will be secret, must be a dissembler in some degree. For men are too cunning, to suffer a man to keep an indifferent carriage between both, and to be secret, without swaying the balance on either side. They will so beset a man with questions, and draw him on, and pick it out of him, that, without an absurd silence, he must show an inclination one way; or if he do not, they will gather as much by his silence, as by his speech. As for equivocations, or oraculous speeches, they cannot hold out long. So that no man can be secret, except he give himself a little scope of dissimulation; which is, as it were, but the skirts or train of secrecy.

But for the third degree, which is simulation, and false profession; that I hold more culpable, and less politic; except it be in great and rare matters. And therefore a general custom of simulation

(which is this last degree) is a vice, using either of a natural falseness or fearfulness, or of a mind that hath some main faults, which because a man must needs disguise, it maketh him practise simulation in other things, lest his hand should be out of use.

The great advantages of simulation and dissimulation are three. First, to lay asleep opposition, and to surprise. For where a man's intentions are published, it is an alarum, to call up all that are against them. The second is, to reserve to a man's self a fair retreat. For if a man engage himself by a manifest declaration, he must go through or take a fall. The third is, the better to discover the mind of another. For to him that opens himself, men will hardly show themselves adverse; but will fair let him go on, and turn their freedom of speech, to freedom of thought. And therefore it is a good shrewd proverb of the Spaniard, Tell a lie and find a troth. As if there were no way of discovery, but by simulation. There be also three disadvantages, to set it even. The first, that simulation and dissimulation commonly carry with them a show of fearfulness, which in any business, doth spoil the feathers, of round flying up to the mark. The second, that it puzzleth and perplexeth the conceits of many, that perhaps would otherwise co-operate with him; and makes a man walk almost alone, to his own ends. The third and greatest is, that it depriveth a man of one of the most principal instruments for action; which is trust and belief. The best composition and temperature, is to have openness in fame and opinion; secrecy in habit; dissimulation in seasonable use; and a power to feign, if there be no remedy.

## Of Parents And Children

THE joys of parents are secret; and so are their griefs and fears. They cannot utter the one; nor they will not utter the other. Children sweeten labors; but they make misfortunes more bitter. They increase the cares of life; but they mitigate the remembrance of death. The perpetuity by generation is common to beasts; but memory, merit, and noble works, are proper to men. And surely a man shall see the noblest works and foundations have proceeded from childless men; which have sought to express the images of their minds, where those of their bodies have failed. So the care of posterity is most in them, that have no posterity. They that are the first raisers of their houses, are most indulgent towards their children; beholding them as the continuance, not only of their kind, but of their work; and so both children and creatures.

The difference in affection, of parents towards their several children, is many times unequal; and sometimes unworthy; especially in the mothers; as Solomon saith, A wise son rejoiceth the father, but an ungracious son shames the mother. A man shall see, where there is a house full of children, one or two of the eldest respected, and the youngest made wantons; but in the midst, some that are as it were forgotten, who many times, nevertheless, prove the best. The illiberality of parents, in allowance towards their children, is an harmful error; makes them base; acquaints them with shifts; makes them sort with mean company; and makes them surfeit more when they come to plenty. And therefore the proof is best, when men keep their authority towards the children, but not their purse. Men have a foolish manner (both parents and schoolmasters and servants) in creating and breeding an emulation between brothers, during childhood, which many times sorteth to discord when they are men, and disturbeth families. The Italians make little difference between children, and nephews or near kinsfolks; but so they be of the lump, they care not though they pass not through their own body. And, to say truth, in nature it is much a like matter; insomuch that we see a nephew sometimes resembleth an uncle, or a kinsman, more than his own parent; as the blood happens. Let parents choose betimes, the vocations and courses they mean their children should take; for then they are most flexible; and let them not too much apply themselves to the disposition of their children, as thinking they will take best to that, which they have most mind to. It is true, that if the affection or aptness of the children be extraordinary, then it is good not to cross it; but generally the precept is good, *optimum elige, suave et facile illud faciet consuetudo*. Younger brothers are commonly fortunate, but seldom or never where the elder are disinherited.

## Of Marriage And Single Life

HE THAT hath wife and children hath given hostages to fortune; for they are impediments to great enterprises, either of virtue or mischief. Certainly the best works, and of greatest merit for the public, have proceeded from the unmarried or childless men; which both in affection and means, have married and endowed the public. Yet it were great reason that those that have children, should have greatest care of future times; unto which they know they must transmit their dearest pledges. Some there are, who though they lead a single life, yet their thoughts do end with themselves, and account future times impertinences. Nay, there are some other, that account wife and children, but as bills of charges. Nay more, there are some foolish rich covetous men, that take a pride, in having no children, because they may be thought so much the richer. For perhaps they have heard some talk, Such an one is a great rich man, and another except to it, Yea, but he hath a great charge of children; as if it were an abatement to his riches. But the most ordinary cause of a single life, is liberty, especially in certain self-pleasing and humorous minds, which are so sensible of every restraint, as they will go near to think their girdles and garters, to be bonds and shackles. Unmarried men are best friends, best masters, best servants; but not always best subjects; for they are light to run away; and almost all fugitives, are of that condition. A single life doth well with churchmen; for charity will hardly water the ground, where it must first fill a pool. It is indifferent for judges and magistrates; for if they be facile and corrupt, you shall have a servant, five times worse than a wife. For soldiers, I find the generals commonly in their hortatives, put men in mind of their wives and children; and I think the despising of marriage amongst the Turks, maketh the vulgar soldier more base. Certainly wife and children are a kind of discipline of humanity; and single men, though they may be many times more charitable, because their means are less exhaust, yet, on the other side, they are more cruel and hardhearted (good to make severe inquisitors), because their tenderness is not so oft called upon. Grave natures, led by custom, and therefore constant, are commonly loving husbands, as was said of Ulysses, *vetulam suam praetulit immortalitati*. Chaste women are often proud and froward, as presuming upon the merit of their chastity. It is one of the best bonds, both of chastity and obedience, in the wife, if she think her husband wise; which she will never do, if she find him jealous. Wives are young men's mistresses; companions for middle age; and old men's nurses. So as a man may have a quarrel to marry, when he will. But yet he was reputed one of the wise men, that made answer to the question, when a man should marry,—A young man not yet, an elder man not at all. It is often seen that bad husbands, have very good wives; whether it be, that it raiseth the price of their husband's kindness, when it comes; or that the wives take a pride in their patience. But this never fails, if the bad husbands were of their own choosing, against their friends' consent; for then they will be sure to make good their own folly.

## Of Envy

THERE be none of the affections, which have been noted to fascinate or bewitch, but love and envy. They both have vehement wishes; they frame themselves readily into imaginations and suggestions; and they come easily into the eye, especially upon the present of the objects; which are the points that conduce to fascination, if any such thing there be. We see likewise, the Scripture calleth envy an evil eye; and the astrologers, call the evil influences of the stars, evil aspects; so that still there seemeth to be acknowledged, in the act of envy, an ejaculation or irradiation of the eye. Nay, some have been so curious, as to note, that the times when the stroke or percussion of an envious eye doth most hurt, are when the party envied is beheld in glory or triumph; for that sets an edge upon envy: and besides, at such times the spirits of the person envied, do come forth most into the outward parts, and so meet the blow.

But leaving these curiosities (though not unworthy to be thought on, in fit place), we will handle, what persons are apt to envy others; what persons are most subject to be envied themselves; and what is the difference between public and private envy.

A man that hath no virtue in himself, ever envieth virtue in others. For men's minds, will either feed upon their own good, or upon others' evil; and who wanteth the one, will prey upon the other; and whoso is out of hope, to attain to another's virtue, will seek to come at even hand, by depressing another's fortune.

A man that is busy, and inquisitive, is commonly envious. For to know much of other men's matters, cannot be because all that ado may concern his own estate; therefore it must needs be, that he taketh a kind of play-pleasure, in looking upon the fortunes of others. Neither can he, that mindeth but his own business, find much matter for envy. For envy is a gadding passion, and walketh the streets, and doth not keep home: *Non est curiosus, quin idem sit malevolus.*

Men of noble birth, are noted to be envious towards new men, when they rise. For the distance is altered, and it is like a deceit of the eye, that when others come on, they think themselves, go back.

Deformed persons, and eunuchs, and old men, and bastards, are envious. For he that cannot possibly mend his own case, will do what he can, to impair another's; except these defects light upon a very brave, and heroical nature, which thinketh to make his natural wants part of his honor; in that it should be said, that an eunuch, or a lame man, did such great matters; affecting the honor of a miracle; as it was in Narses the eunuch, and Agesilaus and Tamberlanes, that were lame men.

The same is the case of men, that rise after calamities and misfortunes. For they are as men fallen out with the times; and think other men's harms, a redemption of their own sufferings.

They that desire to excel in too many matters, out of levity and vain glory, are ever envious. For they cannot want work; it being impossible, but many, in some one of those things, should surpass them. Which was the character of Adrian the Emperor; that mortally envied poets, and painters, and artificers, in works wherein he had a vein to excel.

Lastly, near kinsfolks, and fellows in office, and those that have been bred together, are more apt to envy their equals, when they are raised. For it doth upbraid unto them their own fortunes, and pointeth at them, and cometh oftener into their remembrance, and incurreth likewise more into the note of others; and envy ever redoubleth from speech and fame. Cain's envy was the more vile and malignant, towards his brother Abel, because when his sacrifice was better accepted, there was no body to look on. Thus much for those, that are apt to envy.

Concerning those that are more or less subject to envy: First, persons of eminent virtue, when they are advanced, are less envied. For their fortune seemeth, but due unto them; and no man envieth the payment of a debt, but rewards and liberality rather. Again, envy is ever joined with the comparing of a man's self; and where there is no comparison, no envy; and therefore kings are not envied, but by kings. Nevertheless it is to be noted, that unworthy persons are most envied, at their first coming in,

and afterwards overcome it better; whereas contrariwise, persons of worth and merit are most envied, when their fortune continueth long. For by that time, though their virtue be the same, yet it hath not the same lustre; for fresh men grow up that darken it.

Persons of noble blood, are less envied in their rising. For it seemeth but right done to their birth. Besides, there seemeth not much added to their fortune; and envy is as the sunbeams, that beat hotter upon a bank, or steep rising ground, than upon a flat. And for the same reason, those that are advanced by degrees, are less envied than those that are advanced suddenly and per saltum.

Those that have joined with their honor great travels, cares, or perils, are less subject to envy. For men think that they earn their honors hardly, and pity them sometimes; and pity ever healeth envy. Wherefore you shall observe, that the more deep and sober sort of politic persons, in their greatness, are ever bemoaning themselves, what a life they lead; chanting a *quanta patimur!* Not that they feel it so, but only to abate the edge of envy. But this is to be understood, of business that is laid upon men, and not such, as they call unto themselves. For nothing increaseth envy more, than an unnecessary and ambitious engrossing of business. And nothing doth extinguish envy more, than for a great person to preserve all other inferior officers, in their full lights and pre-eminences of their places. For by that means, there be so many screens between him and envy.

Above all, those are most subject to envy, which carry the greatness of their fortunes, in an insolent and proud manner; being never well, but while they are showing how great they are, either by outward pomp, or by triumphing over all opposition or competition; whereas wise men will rather do sacrifice to envy, in suffering themselves sometimes of purpose to be crossed, and overborne in things that do not much concern them. Notwithstanding, so much is true, that the carriage of greatness, in a plain and open manner (so it be without arrogancy and vain glory) doth draw less envy, than if it be in a more crafty and cunning fashion. For in that course, a man doth but disavow fortune; and seemeth to be conscious of his own want in worth; and doth but teach others, to envy him.

Lastly, to conclude this part; as we said in the beginning, that the act of envy had somewhat in it of witchcraft, so there is no other cure of envy, but the cure of witchcraft; and that is, to remove the lot (as they call it) and to lay it upon another. For which purpose, the wiser sort of great persons, bring in ever upon the stage somebody upon whom to derive the envy, that would come upon themselves; sometimes upon ministers and servants; sometimes upon colleagues and associates; and the like; and for that turn there are never wanting, some persons of violent and undertaking natures, who, so they may have power and business, will take it at any cost.

Now, to speak of public envy. There is yet some good in public envy, whereas in private, there is none. For public envy, is as an ostracism, that eclipseth men, when they grow too great. And therefore it is a bridle also to great ones, to keep them within bounds.

This envy, being in the Latin word *invidia*, goeth in the modern language, by the name of discontentment; of which we shall speak, in handling sedition. It is a disease, in a state, like to infection. For as infection spreadeth upon that which is sound, and tainteth it; so when envy is gotten once into a state, it traduceth even the best actions thereof, and turneth them into an ill odor. And therefore there is little won, by intermingling of plausible actions. For that doth argue but a weakness, and fear of envy, which hurteth so much the more, as it is likewise usual in infections; which if you fear them, you call them upon you.

This public envy, seemeth to beat chiefly upon principal officers or ministers, rather than upon kings, and estates themselves. But this is a sure rule, that if the envy upon the minister be great, when the cause of it in him is small; or if the envy be general, in a manner upon all the ministers of an estate; then the envy (though hidden) is truly upon the state itself. And so much of public envy or discontentment, and the difference thereof from private envy, which was handled in the first place.

We will add this in general, touching the affection of envy; that of all other affections, it is the most importune and continual. For of other affections, there is occasion given, but now and then; and therefore it was well said, *Invidia festos dies non agit*: for it is ever working upon some or other. And

it is also noted, that love and envy do make a man pine, which other affections do not, because they are not so continual. It is also the vilest affection, and the most depraved; for which cause it is the proper attribute of the devil, who is called, the envious man, that soweth tares amongst the wheat by night; as it always cometh to pass, that envy worketh subtilly, and in the dark, and to the prejudice of good things, such as is the wheat.

## Of Love

THE stage is more beholding to love, than the life of man. For as to the stage, love is ever matter of comedies, and now and then of tragedies; but in life it doth much mischief; sometimes like a siren, sometimes like a fury. You may observe, that amongst all the great and worthy persons (whereof the memory remaineth, either ancient or recent) there is not one, that hath been transported to the mad degree of love: which shows that great spirits, and great business, do keep out this weak passion. You must except, nevertheless, Marcus Antonius, the half partner of the empire of Rome, and Appius Claudius, the decemvir and lawgiver; whereof the former was indeed a voluptuous man, and inordinate; but the latter was an austere and wise man: and therefore it seems (though rarely) that love can find entrance, not only into an open heart, but also into a heart well fortified, if watch be not well kept. It is a poor saying of Epicurus, *Satis magnum alter alteri theatrum sumus*; as if man, made for the contemplation of heaven, and all noble objects, should do nothing but kneel before a little idol, and make himself a subject, though not of the mouth (as beasts are), yet of the eye; which was given him for higher purposes. It is a strange thing, to note the excess of this passion, and how it braves the nature, and value of things, by this; that the speaking in a perpetual hyperbole, is comely in nothing but in love. Neither is it merely in the phrase; for whereas it hath been well said, that the arch-flatterer, with whom all the petty flatterers have intelligence, is a man's self; certainly the lover is more. For there was never proud man thought so absurdly well of himself, as the lover doth of the person loved; and therefore it was well said, That it is impossible to love, and to be wise. Neither doth this weakness appear to others only, and not to the party loved; but to the loved most of all, except the love be reciproque. For it is a true rule, that love is ever rewarded, either with the reciproque, or with an inward and secret contempt. By how much the more, men ought to beware of this passion, which loseth not only other things, but itself! As for the other losses, the poet's relation doth well figure them: that he that preferred Helena, quitted the gifts of Juno and Pallas. For whosoever esteemeth too much of amorous affection, quitteth both riches and wisdom. This passion hath his floods, in very times of weakness; which are great prosperity, and great adversity; though this latter hath been less observed: both which times kindle love, and make it more fervent, and therefore show it to be the child of folly. They do best, who if they cannot but admit love, yet make it keep quarters; and sever it wholly from their serious affairs, and actions, of life; for if it check once with business, it troubleth men's fortunes, and maketh men, that they can no ways be true to their own ends. I know not how, but martial men are given to love: I think, it is but as they are given to wine; for perils commonly ask to be paid in pleasures. There is in man's nature, a secret inclination and motion, towards love of others, which if it be not spent upon some one or a few, doth naturally spread itself towards many, and maketh men become humane and charitable; as it is seen sometime in friars. Nuptial love maketh mankind; friendly love perfecteth it; but wanton love corrupteth, and embaseth it.

## Of Great Place

MEN in great place are thrice servants: servants of the sovereign or state; servants of fame; and servants of business. So as they have no freedom; neither in their persons, nor in their actions, nor in their times. It is a strange desire, to seek power and to lose liberty: or to seek power over others, and to lose power over a man's self. The rising unto place is laborious; and by pains, men come to greater pains; and it is sometimes base; and by indignities, men come to dignities. The standing is slippery, and the regress is either a downfall, or at least an eclipse, which is a melancholy thing. *Cum non sis qui fueris, non esse cur velis vivere.* Nay, retire men cannot when they would, neither will they, when it were reason; but are impatient of privateness, even in age and sickness, which require the shadow; like old townsmen, that will be still sitting at their street door, though thereby they offer age to scome. Certainly great persons had need to borrow other men's opinions, to think themselves happy; for if they judge by their own feeling, they cannot find it; but if they think with themselves, what other men think of them, and that other men would fain be, as they are, then they are happy, as it were, by report; when perhaps they find the contrary within. For they are the first, that find their own griefs, though they be the last, that find their own faults. Certainly men in great fortunes are strangers to themselves, and while they are in the puzzle of business, they have no time to tend their health, either of body or mind. *Illi mors gravis incubat, qui notus nimis omnibus, ignotus moritur sibi.* In place, there is license to do good, and evil; whereof the latter is a curse: for in evil, the best condition is not to win; the second, not to can. But power to do good, is the true and lawful end of aspiring. For good thoughts (though God accept them) yet, towards men, are little better than good dreams, except they be put in act; and that cannot be, without power and place, as the vantage, and commanding ground. Merit and good works, is the end of man's motion; and conscience of the same is the accomplishment of man's rest. For if a man can be partaker of God's theatre, he shall likewise be partaker of God's rest. *Et conversus Deus, ut aspiceret opera quae fecerunt manus suae, vidit quod omnia essent bona nimis;* and then the sabbath. In the discharge of thy place, set before thee the best examples; for imitation is a globe of precepts. And after a time, set before thee thine own example; and examine thyself strictly, whether thou didst not best at first. Neglect not also the examples, of those that have carried themselves ill, in the same place; not to set off thyself, by taxing their memory, but to direct thyself, what to avoid. Reform therefore, without bravery, or scandal of former times and persons; but yet set it down to thyself, as well to create good precedents, as to follow them. Reduce things to the first institution, and observe wherein, and how, they have degenerate; but yet ask counsel of both times; of the ancient time, what is best; and of the latter time, what is fittest. Seek to make thy course regular, that men may know beforehand, what they may expect; but be not too positive and peremptory; and express thyself well, when thou digressest from thy rule. Preserve the right of thy place; but stir not questions of jurisdiction; and rather assume thy right, in silence and *de facto*, than voice it with claims, and challenges. Preserve likewise the rights of inferior places; and think it more honor, to direct in chief, than to be busy in all. Embrace and invite helps, and advices, touching the execution of thy place; and do not drive away such, as bring thee information, as meddlers; but accept of them in good part. The vices of authority are chiefly four: delays, corruption, roughness, and facility. For delays: give easy access; keep times appointed; go through with that which is in hand, and interlace not business, but of necessity. For corruption: do not only bind thine own hands, or thy servants' hands, from taking, but bind the hands of suitors also, from offering. For integrity used doth the one; but integrity professed, and with a manifest detestation of bribery, doth the other. And avoid not only the fault, but the suspicion. Whosoever is found variable, and changeth manifestly without manifest cause, giveth suspicion of corruption. Therefore always, when thou changest thine opinion or course, profess it plainly, and declare it, together with the reasons that move thee to change; and do not think to steal it. A servant or a favorite, if he be inward, and no other apparent cause of

esteem, is commonly thought, but a by-way to close corruption. For roughness: it is a needless cause of discontent: severity breedeth fear, but roughness breedeth hate. Even reproofs from authority, ought to be grave, and not taunting. As for facility: it is worse than bribery. For bribes come but now and then; but if importunity, or idle respects, lead a man, he shall never be without. As Solomon saith, To respect persons is not good; for such a man will transgress for a piece of bread. It is most true, that was anciently spoken, A place showeth the man. And it showeth some to the better, and some to the worse. *Omnium consensu capax imperii, nisi imperasset*, saith Tacitus of Galba; but of Vespasian he saith, *Solus imperantium, Vespasianus mutatus in melius*; though the one was meant of sufficiency, the other of manners, and affection. It is an assured sign of a worthy and generous spirit, whom honor amends. For honor is, or should be, the place of virtue; and as in nature, things move violently to their place, and calmly in their place, so virtue in ambition is violent, in authority settled and calm. All rising to great place is by a winding star; and if there be factions, it is good to side a man's self, whilst he is in the rising, and to balance himself when he is placed. Use the memory of thy predecessor, fairly and tenderly; for if thou dost not, it is a debt will sure be paid when thou art gone. If thou have colleagues, respect them, and rather call them, when they look not for it, than exclude them, when they have reason to look to be called. Be not too sensible, or too remembering, of thy place in conversation, and private answers to suitors; but let it rather be said, When he sits in place, he is another man.

## Of Boldness

IT IS a trivial grammar-school text, but yet worthy a wise man's consideration. Question was asked of Demosthenes, what was the chief part of an orator? he answered, action; what next? action; what next again? action. He said it, that knew it best, and had, by nature, himself no advantage in that he commended. A strange thing, that that part of an orator, which is but superficial, and rather the virtue of a player, should be placed so high, above those other noble parts, of invention, elocution, and the rest; nay, almost alone, as if it were all in all. But the reason is plain. There is in human nature generally, more of the fool than of the wise; and therefore those faculties, by which the foolish part of men's minds is taken, are most potent. Wonderful like is the case of boldness in civil business: what first? boldness; what second and third? boldness. And yet boldness is a child of ignorance and baseness, far inferior to other parts. But nevertheless it doth fascinate, and bind hand and foot, those that are either shallow in judgment, or weak in courage, which are the greatest part; yea and prevaieth with wise men at weak times. Therefore we see it hath done wonders, in popular states; but with senates, and princes less; and more ever upon the first entrance of bold persons into action, than soon after; for boldness is an ill keeper of promise. Surely, as there are mountebanks for the natural body, so are there mountebanks for the politic body; men that undertake great cures, and perhaps have been lucky, in two or three experiments, but want the grounds of science, and therefore cannot hold out. Nay, you shall see a bold fellow many times do Mahomet's miracle. Mahomet made the people believe that he would call an hill to him, and from the top of it offer up his prayers, for the observers of his law. The people assembled; Mahomet called the hill to come to him, again and again; and when the hill stood still, he was never a whit abashed, but said, If the hill will not come to Mahomet, Mahomet will go to the hill. So these men, when they have promised great matters, and failed most shamefully, yet (if they have the perfection of boldness) they will but slight it over, and make a turn, and no more ado. Certainly to men of great judgment, bold persons are a sport to behold; nay, and to the vulgar also, boldness has somewhat of the ridiculous. For if absurdity be the subject of laughter, doubt you not but great boldness is seldom without some absurdity. Especially it is a sport to see, when a bold fellow is out of countenance; for that puts his face into a most shrunken, and wooden posture; as needs it must; for in bashfulness, the spirits do a little go and come; but with bold men, upon like occasion, they stand at a stay; like a stale at chess, where it is no mate, but yet the game cannot stir. But this last were fitter for a satire than for a serious observation. This is well to be weighed; that boldness is ever blind; for it seeth not danger, and inconveniences. Therefore it is ill in counsel, good in execution; so that the right use of bold persons is, that they never command in chief, but be seconds, and under the direction of others. For in counsel, it is good to see dangers; and in execution, not to see them, except they be very great.

## Of Goodness and Goodness Of Nature

I TAKE goodness in this sense, the affecting of the weal of men, which is that the Grecians call philanthropia; and the word humanity (as it is used) is a little too light to express it. Goodness I call the habit, and goodness of nature, the inclination. This of all virtues, and dignities of the mind, is the greatest; being the character of the Deity: and without it, man is a busy, mischievous, wretched thing; no better than a kind of vermin. Goodness answers to the theological virtue, charity, and admits no excess, but error. The desire of power in excess, caused the angels to fall; the desire of knowledge in excess, caused man to fall: but in charity there is no excess; neither can angel, nor man, come in danger by it. The inclination to goodness, is imprinted deeply in the nature of man; insomuch, that if it issue not towards men, it will take unto other living creatures; as it is seen in the Turks, a cruel people, who nevertheless are kind to beasts, and give alms, to dogs and birds; insomuch, as Busbechius reporteth, a Christian boy, in Constantinople, had like to have been stoned, for gagging in a waggishness a long-billed fowl. Errors indeed in this virtue of goodness, or charity, may be committed. The Italians have an ungracious proverb, Tanto buon che val niente: so good, that he is good for nothing. And one of the doctors of Italy, Nicholas Machiavel, had the confidence to put in writing, almost in plain terms, That the Christian faith, had given up good men, in prey to those that are tyrannical and unjust. Which he spake, because indeed there was never law, or sect, or opinion, did so much magnify goodness, as the Christian religion doth. Therefore, to avoid the scandal and the danger both, it is good, to take knowledge of the errors of an habit so excellent. Seek the good of other men, but be not in bondage to their faces or fancies; for that is but facility, or softness; which taketh an honest mind prisoner. Neither give thou AEsop's cock a gem, who would be better pleased, and happier, if he had had a barley-corn. The example of God, teacheth the lesson truly: He sendeth his rain, and maketh his sun to shine, upon the just and unjust; but he doth not rain wealth, nor shine honor and virtues, upon men equally. Common benefits, are to be communicate with all; but peculiar benefits, with choice. And beware how in making the portraiture, thou breakest the pattern. For divinity, maketh the love of ourselves the pattern; the love of our neighbors, but the portraiture. Sell all thou hast, and give it to the poor, and follow me: but, sell not all thou hast, except thou come and follow me; that is, except thou have a vocation, wherein thou mayest do as much good, with little means as with great; for otherwise, in feeding the streams, thou driest the fountain. Neither is there only a habit of goodness, directed by right reason; but there is in some men, even in nature, a disposition towards it; as on the other side, there is a natural malignity. For there be, that in their nature do not affect the good of others. The lighter sort of malignity, turneth but to a crassness, or frowardness, or aptness to oppose, or difficulties, or the like; but the deeper sort, to envy and mere mischief. Such men, in other men's calamities, are, as it were, in season, and are ever on the loading part: not so good as the dogs, that licked Lazarus' sores; but like flies, that are still buzzing upon any thing that is raw; misanthropi, that make it their practice, to bring men to the bough, and yet never a tree for the purpose in their gardens, as Timon had. Such dispositions, are the very errors of human nature; and yet they are the fittest timber, to make great politics of; like to knee timber, that is good for ships, that are ordained to be tossed; but not for building houses, that shall stand firm. The parts and signs of goodness, are many. If a man be gracious and courteous to strangers, it shows he is a citizen of the world, and that his heart is no island, cut off from other lands, but a continent, that joins to them. If he be compassionate towards the afflictions of others, it shows that his heart is like the noble tree, that is wounded itself, when it gives the balm. If he easily pardons, and remits offences, it shows that his mind is planted above injuries; so that he cannot be shot. If he be thankful for small benefits, it shows that he weighs men's minds, and not their trash. But above all, if he have St. Paul's perfection, that he would wish to be anathema from Christ, for the salvation of his brethren, it shows much of a divine nature, and a kind of conformity with Christ himself.

## Of Nobility

WE WILL speak of nobility, first as a portion of an estate, then as a condition of particular persons. A monarchy, where there is no nobility at all, is ever a pure and absolute tyranny; as that of the Turks. For nobility attempters sovereignty, and draws the eyes of the people, somewhat aside from the line royal. But for democracies, they need it not; and they are commonly more quiet, and less subject to sedition, than where there are stirps of nobles. For men's eyes are upon the business, and not upon the persons; or if upon the persons, it is for the business' sake, as fittest, and not for flags and pedigree. We see the Switzers last well, notwithstanding their diversity of religion, and of cantons. For utility is their bond, and not respects. The united provinces of the Low Countries, in their government, excel; for where there is an equality, the consultations are more indifferent, and the payments and tributes, more cheerful. A great and potent nobility, addeth majesty to a monarch, but diminisheth power; and putteth life and spirit into the people, but presseth their fortune. It is well, when nobles are not too great for sovereignty nor for justice; and yet maintained in that height, as the insolency of inferiors may be broken upon them, before it come on too fast upon the majesty of kings. A numerous nobility causeth poverty, and inconvenience in a state; for it is a surcharge of expense; and besides, it being of necessity, that many of the nobility fall, in time, to be weak in fortune, it maketh a kind of disproportion, between honor and means.

As for nobility in particular persons; it is a reverend thing, to see an ancient castle or building, not in decay; or to see a fair timber tree, sound and perfect. How much more, to behold an ancient noble family, which has stood against the waves and weathers of time! For new nobility is but the act of power, but ancient nobility is the act of time. Those that are first raised to nobility, are commonly more virtuous, but less innocent, than their descendants; for there is rarely any rising, but by a commixture of good and evil arts. But it is reason, the memory of their virtues remain to their posterity, and their faults die with themselves. Nobility of birth commonly abateth industry; and he that is not industrious, envieth him that is. Besides, noble persons cannot go much higher; and he that standeth at a stay, when others rise, can hardly avoid motions of envy. On the other side, nobility extinguisheth the passive envy from others, towards them; because they are in possession of honor. Certainly, kings that have able men of their nobility, shall find ease in employing them, and a better slide into their business; for people naturally bend to them, as born in some sort to command.

## Of Seditious And Troubles

SHEPHERDS of people, had need know the calendars of tempests in state; which are commonly greatest, when things grow to equality; as natural tempests are greatest about the Equinoctia. And as there are certain hollow blasts of wind, and secret swellings of seas before a tempest, so are there in states:

—Ille etiam caecos instare tumultus  
Saepe monet, fraudesque et operta turescere bella.

Libels and licentious discourses against the state, when they are frequent and open; and in like sort, false news often running up and down, to the disadvantage of the state, and hastily embraced; are amongst the signs of troubles. Virgil, giving the pedigree of Fame, saith, she was sister to the Giants:

Illam Terra parens, irra irritata deorum, Extremam (ut perhibent) Coeo Enceladoque sororem Progenit.

As if fames were the relics of seditious past; but they are no less, indeed, the preludes of seditious to come. Howsoever he noteth it right, that seditious tumults, and seditious fames, differ no more but as brother and sister, masculine and feminine; especially if it come to that, that the best actions of a state, and the most plausible, and which ought to give greatest contentment, are taken in ill sense, and traduced: for that shows the envy great, as Tacitus saith; *conflata magna invidia, seu bene seu male gesta premunt*. Neither doth it follow, that because these fames are a sign of troubles, that the suppressing of them with too much severity, should be a remedy of troubles. For the despising of them, many times checks them best; and the going about to stop them, doth but make a wonder long-lived. Also that kind of obedience, which Tacitus speaketh of, is to be held suspected: *Erant in officio, sed tamen qui mallent mandata imperantium interpretari quam exequi*; disputing, excusing, cavilling upon mandates and directions, is a kind of shaking off the yoke, and assay of disobedience; especially if in those disputings, they which are for the direction, speak fearfully and tenderly, and those that are against it, audaciously.

Also, as Machiavel noteth well, when princes, that ought to be common parents, make themselves as a party, and lean to a side, it is as a boat, that is overthrown by uneven weight on the one side; as was well seen, in the time of Henry the Third of France; for first, himself entered league for the extirpation of the Protestants; and presently after, the same league was turned upon himself. For when the authority of princes, is made but an accessory to a cause, and that there be other bands, that tie faster than the band of sovereignty, kings begin to be put almost out of possession.

Also, when discords, and quarrels, and factions are carried openly and audaciously, it is a sign the reverence of government is lost. For the motions of the greatest persons in a government, ought to be as the motions of the planets under *primum mobile*; according to the old opinion: which is, that every of them, is carried swiftly by the highest motion, and softly in their own motion. And therefore, when great ones in their own particular motion, move violently, and, as Tacitus expresseth it well, *liberius quam ut imperantium meminissent*; it is a sign the orbs are out of frame. For reverence is that, wherewith princes are girt from God; who threateneth the dissolving thereof; *Solvam cingula regum*.

So when any of the four pillars of government, are mainly shaken, or weakened (which are religion, justice, counsel, and treasure), men had need to pray for fair weather. But let us pass from this part of predictions (concerning which, nevertheless, more light may be taken from that which followeth); and let us speak first, of the materials of seditious; then of the motives of them; and thirdly of the remedies.

Concerning the materials of seditious. It is a thing well to be considered; for the surest way to prevent seditious (if the times do bear it) is to take away the matter of them. For if there be fuel

prepared, it is hard to tell, whence the spark shall come, that shall set it on fire. The matter of seditions is of two kinds: much poverty, and much discontentment. It is certain, so many overthrown estates, so many votes for troubles. Lucan noteth well the state of Rome before the Civil War,

Hinc usura vorax, rapidumque in tempore foenus,  
Hinc concussa fides, et multis utile bellum.

This same multis utile bellum, is an assured and infallible sign, of a state disposed to seditions and troubles. And if this poverty and broken estate in the better sort, be joined with a want and necessity in the mean people, the danger is imminent and great. For the rebellions of the belly are the worst. As for discontentments, they are, in the politic body, like to humors in the natural, which are apt to gather a preternatural heat, and to inflame. And let no prince measure the danger of them by this, whether they be just or unjust: for that were to imagine people, to be too reasonable; who do often spurn at their own good: nor yet by this, whether the griefs whereupon they rise, be in fact great or small: for they are the most dangerous discontentments, where the fear is greater than the feeling. Dolendi modus, timendi non item. Besides, in great oppressions, the same things that provoke the patience, do withal mate the courage; but in fears it is not so. Neither let any prince, or state, be secure concerning discontentments, because they have been often, or have been long, and yet no peril hath ensued: for as it is true, that every vapor or fume doth not turn into a storm; so it is nevertheless true, that storms, though they blow over divers times, yet may fall at last; and, as the Spanish proverb noteth well, The cord breaketh at the last by the weakest pull.

The causes and motives of seditions are, innovation in religion; taxes; alteration of laws and customs; breaking of privileges; general oppression; advancement of unworthy persons; strangers; dearths; disbanded soldiers; factions grown desperate; and what soever, in offending people, joineth and knitteth them in a common cause.

For the remedies; there may be some general preservatives, whereof we will speak: as for the just cure, it must answer to the particular disease; and so be left to counsel, rather than rule.

The first remedy or prevention is to remove, by all means possible, that material cause of sedition whereof we spake; which is, want and poverty in the estate. To which purpose serveth the opening, and well-balancing of trade; the cherishing of manufactures; the banishing of idleness; the repressing of waste, and excess, by sumptuary laws; the improvement and husbanding of the soil; the regulating of prices of things vendible; the moderating of taxes and tributes; and the like. Generally, it is to be foreseen that the population of a kingdom (especially if it be not mown down by wars) do not exceed the stock of the kingdom, which should maintain them. Neither is the population to be reckoned only by number; for a smaller number, that spend more and earn less, do wear out an estate sooner, than a greater number that live lower, and gather more. Therefore the multiplying of nobility, and other degrees of quality, in an over proportion to the common people, doth speedily bring a state to necessity; and so doth likewise an overgrown clergy; for they bring nothing to the stock; and in like manner, when more are bred scholars, than preferments can take off.

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