Early
Modern
English
Reading
Group

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'Montaigne and the Essay in England

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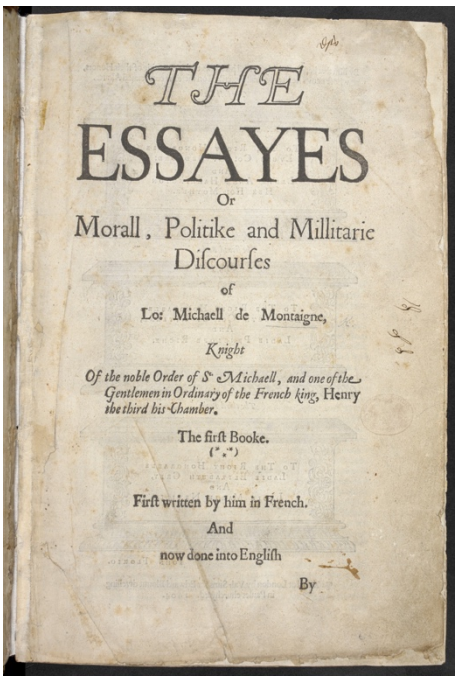
Via Zoom

Michel de Montaigne, *The Essayes; Or Morall, Politike, and Militarie Discourses of Lord Michaell de Montaigne, Knight* (1603), trans. John Florio

Left: Montaigne, *Essayes*, trans. John Florio (1632), engraved frontispiece.

Below: Montaigne, *Essayes*, trans. John Florio (1603), title page.


THE
ESSAYES
Or
Morall, Politike and Millitarie
Diſcourſes
of
Lo: Michaell de Montaigne,
Knight
Of the noble Order of S^r Michaell, and one of the
Gentlemen in Ordinary of the French king, Henry
the third his Chamber.
The firſt Booke.
(* * *)
First written by him in French.
And
now done into Engliſh
By

i) [Anon.], '*To the Beholder of this Title*'

When first this portlike Frontispiece was wrought,
To raise a Pile complete, it was our thought,
Whose Rooms and Galleries should have been trim'd
With Emblems, and with Pictures fairly lim'd,
And drawn from those neat Pieces, which do lurk
Within the Closets of this Author's work:
So placing them, and them contriving so,
That ev'ry Reader (passing to and fro)
By casting thereupon a glancing eye,
Might in that Model or Epitome,
(Ev'n at the first aspect) informed have been,
Of ev'ry Rarity contained within.
But walking through that Palace of Invention,
(The better to accomplish our Intention)
We found unlooked for, scattered here and there,
Such Profits, and such pleasures, ev'rywhere,
In such Variety, that, to but name
Each one, would make a Volume of the same.
For in those Angles, and among those Leaves
Whereon the rash Beholder's eye perceives
No shows or promises, of such choice things,
A diligent unfolder of them brings
Concealed Fruits to light: Ev'n thus did we
In such abundance, that they prove to be
Beyond a brief expression, and have stop't
Our purpose in presenting what we hop'd.
Instead of Emblems therefore, to explain
The scope of this great Volume, we are fain
To fic the Author's Title, on the Gate,
Annexed to his Name, presuming that
Will give this following Treatise much more praise
Then all the Trophies which our skill can raise.
For, he that hath not heard of Mountain yet,
Is but a novice in the schools of wit.
You that so please to enter: For, behold
The Gate stands open, and the doors unfold
Their leaves to entertain you. That French ward
Which lately kept you forth, is now unbarred,
And you may pass at pleasure ev'ry way
If you are furnished with an English-key.
That, we suppose you want not: If you do,
We are not they, whom this was meant unto:
Pray pass along, and stare no more on that
Which is the Picture of you know not what.
Yet, if it please you, Spell it, And if then
You understand it not, Give them room that can.

ii) John Florio, 'To the courteous Reader'

Shall I apologize translation? Why but some holde (as for their free-hold that such conversion is the subversion of Universities). God holde with them, and withholde them from impeach or empaire. It were an ill turne, the turning of Bookes should be the overturning of Libraries. Yea but my olde fellow Nolano tolde me, and taught publikely, that from translation all Science had it's of-spring. Likely, since even Philosophie, Grammar, Rhethorike, Logike, Arithmetike, Geometrie, Astronomy, Musike, and all the Mathematikes yet holde their name of the Greekes: and the Greekes drew their baptizing water from the conduit-pipes of the Egiptians, and they from the well-springs of the Hebrews or Chaldees. And can the wel-springs be so sweete and deepe; and will the well-drawne water be so sower and smell? And were their Countries so ennobled, advantaged, and embellished by such deriving; and doth it drive our noblest Colonies upon the rockes of ruine? And did they well? and prooved they well? and must we proove ill that doe so? Why but Learning would not be made common. Yea but Learning cannot be too common and the commoner the better. Why but who is not jealous, his Mistresse should be so prostitute? Yea but this Mistresse is like ayre, fire, water, the more breathed the clearer; the more extended the warmer; the more drawne the sweeter. It were inhumanitie to coope her up, and worthy forfeiture close to conceale her. Why but Schollers should have some privilege of preheminence. So have they: they onely are worthy Translators. Why but the vulgar should not knowe at all. No, they can not for all this; nor even Schollers for much more: I would, both could and knew much more than either doth or can. Why but all would not be knowne of all. No nor can: much more we know not than we know: all know something, none know all: would all know all? they must breake ere they be so bigge. God only; men farre from God. Why but pearles should not be cast to swine: yet are rings put in their noses; and a swine should know his stie, and will know his meate and his medicine, and as much beside, as any swine doth suppose it to be Marjoram. Why, but it is not wel Divinite should be a childes or old wives, a coblers, or clothiers tale or table-talke. There is use, and abuse: use none too much: abuse none too little. Why but let Learning be wrapt in a learned mantle. Yea but to be unwrapt by a leaned nurse: yea, to be lapt up againe. Yea, and unlapt againe. Else, hold we ignorance the mother of devotion; praying and preaching in an unknowne tongue: as sory a mother, as a seely daughter: a good minde perhaps, but surely an ill manner. If the best be meete for us, why should the best be barrd? Why but the best wrote best in a tongue more unknowne: Nay in a tongue more known to them that wrote, and not unknowne of them to whom they wrote. Why but more honour to him that speakes more learned. Yea such perhaps, as *Quintillians Orator*: a learned man I warrant him, for I understand him never a word. Why but let men write for the most honour of the Writer. Nay, for most profit of the Reader: and so haply, most honour. If to write obscurely be perplexedly offensive,as Augustus well judged: for our owne not to write in our owne but unintelligible, is haply to fewer and more criticall, but surely without honor, without profit, if he goe not, or send not an interpreter; who else what is he but a Translator? Obscure be he that loves obscuritie. And therefore willingly I take his worde, though wittingly I doe mistake it, *Translata proficit*.

iii) Montaigne, '*Of the institution and education of children*', trans. Florio

I never knew father, how crooked and deformed soever his sonne were, that would either altogether cast him off, or not acknowledge him for his owne: and yet (unlease he be meerely besotted or blinded in his affection) it may not be said, but he plainly perceiveth his defects, and hath a feeling of his imperfections. But so it is, he is his owne. So it is in myselfe. I see better than any man else, that what I have set downe is nought but the fond imaginations of

him who in his youth hath tasted nothing but the paring, and seen but superficies of true learning: whereof he hath retained but a generall and shapelesse forme: a smacke of every thing in general, but nothing to the purpose in particular: After the French manner. To be short, I know there is an art of Phisicke; a course of lawes; foure parts of the Mathematikes; and I am not altogether ignorant what they tend unto. And perhaps I also know the scope and drift of Sciences in generall to be for the service of our life. But to wade further, or that ever I tired my selfe with plodding upon *Aristotle* (the Monarch of our moderne doctrine) or obstinately continued in search of any one science: I confesse I never did it. Nor is there any one art whereof I am able so much as to draw the first lineaments. And there is no scholler (be he of the lowest forme) that may not repute himselfe wiser than I, who am not able to oppose him in his first lesson: and if I be forced to it, I am constrained verie impertinently to draw in matter from some generall discourse, whereby I examine, and give a guesse at his naturall judgement: a lesson as much unknowne to them as theirs is to me. I have not dealt or had commerce with any excellent booke, except *Plutarke* or *Seneca*, from whom (as the *Danaides*) I draw my water, uncessantly filling, and as fast emptying: some thing whereof I fasten to this paper, but to my selfe nothing at all. And touching Bookes: Historie is my chiefe studie, Poesie my only delight, to which I am particularly affected: for as *Cleanthes* said, that as the voice being forciblie pent in the narrow gullet of a trumpet, at last issueth forth more strong and shriller , so me seemes, that a sentence cunningly and closely couched in measure-keeping Posie, darts it selfe forth more furiously, and wounds me even to the quicke. And concerning the naturall faculties that are in me (whereof behold here an essay). I perceive them to faint under their owne burthen; my conceits, and my judgement march but uncertaine, and as it were groping, staggering, and stumbling at every rush: And when I have gone as far as I can, I have no whit pleased my selfe: for the further I saile the more land I descrie, and that so dimmed with fogges, and overcast with clouds, that my sight is so weakned, I cannot distinguish the same. And then undertaking to speake indifferently of all that presents it selfe unto my fantasie, and having nothing put mine owne naturall meanes to imploy therein, if it be my hap (as commonly it is) among good Authors, to light upon those verie places which I have undertaken to treat off, as even now I did in *Plutarke*, reading his discourse of the power of imagination, wherein in regard of those wise men, I acknowledge my selfe so weake and so poore, so dull and grose-headed, as I am forced both to pittie and disdaine my selfe, yet am I pleased with this; that my opinions have often the grace to jump with theirs, and that I follow them a loofe-off, and thereby possesse at least, that which all other men have not; which is, that I know the utmost difference between them and my selfe: all which notwithstanding, I suffer my inventions to run abroad, as weake and faint as I have produced them, without bungling and botching the faults which this comparison hath discovered to me in them. A man had need have a stronge backe, to undertake to march foot to foot with these kind of men. The indiscreet writers of our age, amidst their triviall compositions, intermingle and wrest in whole sentences taken from ancient Authors, supposing by such filching-theft to purchase honour and reputation to themselves, doe cleane contrarie. For, this infinite varietie and dissemblance of lustres, makes a face so wan, so ill-favored, and so uglie, in respect of theirs, that they lose much more than gaine thereby. These were two contrarie humours: The Philosopher *Chrisippus* was wont to foist-in amongst his bookes, not only whole sentences and other long-long discourses, but whole bookes of other Authors, as in one, he brought in *Euripides* his *Medea*.
And *Apollodorus* was wont to say of him, that if one should draw from out his bookes what he had stolne from others, his paper would remaine blanke. Whereas *Epicurus* cleane contrarie to him in three hundred volumes he left behind him, had not made use of one allegation.

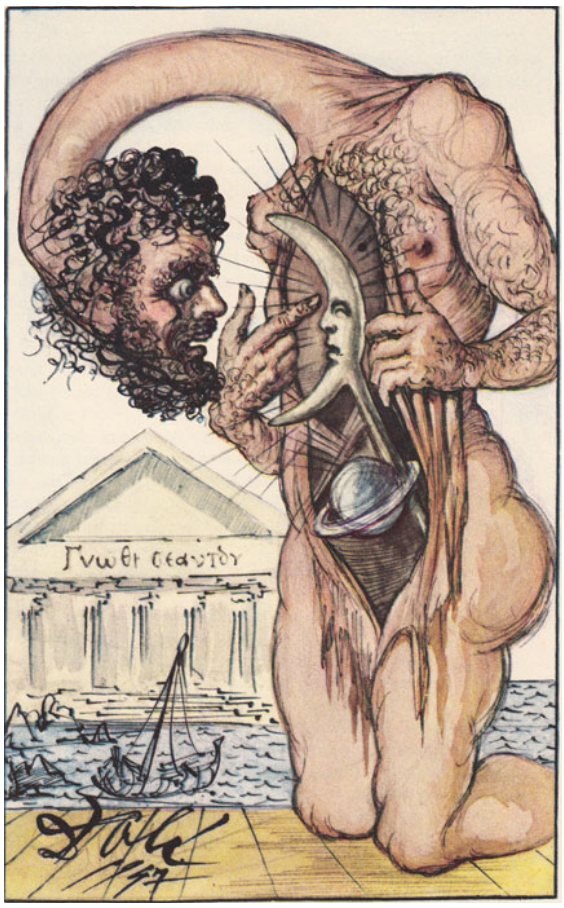
iv) Montaigne, '*Of Vanity*', trans. Florio

Fortune giveth the facilitie of my lives-condition some aide, having placed it in such a time wherein it is neither needfull nor combersome unto my people. It is a condition I would have accepted in all the seasons of my age, but in this occasion to trusse my bag and baggage and take up my bed and walke. I am particularly pleased that when I shall die, I shall neither breede pleasure nor cause sorrow in them. Shee hath caused (which is the recompence of an artist) that such as by my death may pretend any materiall benefit, receive thereby elswhere jointly a materiall losse and hinderance. Death lies sometimes heavie upon us, in that it is burthensome to others; and interesseth us with their interest almost as much as with ours, and sometimes more; yea altogether.
[…]
If the way be foule on my right hand, I take the left. If I find my selfe ill at ease or unfit to ride, I stay at home. Which doing, and observing this course, in very truth I see no place and come no where that is not as pleasant, as convenient, and as commodious as mine owne house. True it is that I ever find superfluitie superfluous, and observe a kind of troublesomenesse in delicatenesse and plenty. Have I omitted or left any thing behind me that was worth the seeing? I returne backe; It is ever my way, I am never out of it. I trace no certaine line, neither right nor crooked. Comming to any strange place, finde I not what was told mee? As it often fortuneth that others judgements agree not with mine, and have most times found them false, I grieve not at my labour; I have learned that what was reported to bee there is not. I have my bodies complexion as free and my taste as common as any man in the world. The diversity of fashions betweene one and other Nations concerneth me nothing , but by the varieties-pleasure. *Each custome hath his reason.* Bee the trenchers or dishes of wood, of pewter, or of earth; bee my meate boyled, rosted, or baked; butter or oyle, and that of Olives or of Wallnuts, hot or colde, I make no difference, all is one to me. And as one that is growing old, I accuse the generous faculties and had need that delicatenesse and choise should stay the indiscretion of my appetite, and sometime ease and solace my stomacke. When I have beene out of *France*, and that to do me curtesie some have asked me Whether I would be served after the French maner, I have jested at them, and have ever thrust-in amongst the thickest tables and fullest of strangers. I am ashamed to see our men besotted with this foolish humor, to fret and chafe when they see any fashions contrary to theirs. They thinke themselves out of their element when they are out of their Village. Where ever they come they keepe their owne country and hate, yea and abhorre all strange manners. Meet they a countriman of theirs in *Hungary*, they feast that good fortune. And what doe they? Marry close and joyne together, to blame, to condemne, and to scorne so many barbarous fashions as they see. And why not Barbarous since not French? Nay, happily they are the better sort of men that have noted and so much exclaimed against them. Most take going out but for comming home. They travell close and covered, with a silent and incommunicable wit, defending themselves from the contagion of some unknowne ayre. What I speake of such puts mee in minde in the like matter of that I have heretofore perceived in some of your young Courtiers. They onely converse with men of their coate, and with disdains or pitty looke upon us as if we were men of another world. Take away their new fangled, mysterious, and affected courtly complements, and they are out of their byase. As farre to seeke and short of us as we of them. That saying is true; That *An honest man is a man compounded*. Cleane contrary, I travell fully glutted with our fashions: Not to seeke Gaskoines in *Sicilie*, I have left over many at home. I rather seeke for Græcians and Persians. Those I accost, Them I consider, and with such I endevour to be acquainted; to that I prepare and therein I employ my selfe. And which is more, me seemeth I have not met with many maners that are not worth ours. Indeed I have not wandred farre, scarsly have I lost the sight of our Chimnies.

Moreover, most of the casuall companies you meete withall by the way have more incommodity than pleasure, a matter I doe not greatly take hold of, and lesse now that age doth particularize and in some sort sequester me from common formes. You suffer for other or others endure for you. The one inconvenience is yrkesome, the other troublesome, but yet the last is (in my conceipt) more rude. *It is a rare chaunce and seld-seene fortune, but of exceeding solace and inestimable worth, to have an honest man of singular experience, of a sound judgement, of a resolute understanding and constant resolution, and of manners conformable to yours, to accompany or follow you with a good will.* I have found great want of such a one in all my voyages. Which company a man must seeke with discretion and with great heed obtaine before he wander from home. With me no pleasure is fully delightsome without communication, and no delight absolute except imparted. I doe not so much as apprehend one rare conceipt, or conceive one excellent good thought in my minde, but me thinks I am much grieved and grievously perplexed to have produced the same alone and that I have no sympathizing companion to impart it unto. *Si cum hac exceptione detur sapientia, ut illam inclusam teneam, nec enunciem, rejiciam: 'If wisdome should be offered with this exception, that I should keepe it concealed and not utter it, I would refuse it.'* The other strain'd it one note higher. *Si contigerit ea vita sapienii, ut omnium rerum afluentibus copiis, quamvis omnia, quæ cognitione digna sunt, summo otio secum ipse consideret et contempletur; tamen si solitudo tanta sit, ut hominem videre non possit, excedat e vita*: (Cic. *Offic*. ii.) *'If a wiseman might lead such a life, as in abundance of all things hee may in full quiet contemplate and consider all things worthy of knowledge, yet if he must be so solitary as he may see no man, he should rather leave such a life.' Architas* his opinion is sutable to mine, which was that it would be a thing unpleasing to the very heavens, and distastefull to man, to survay and walke within those immense and divine and coelestiall bodies, without the assistance of a friend or companion; *Yet is it better to be alone than in tedious and foolish company. Aristippus* loved to live as an alien or stranger every where:

Me si fata meis patereutur ducere vitam
Auspiciis. -- Virg. *Æn*. iv. 339.
If fates would me permit
To live as I thinke fit,

I should chose to weare out my life with my bum in the saddle, ever riding.



v) Montaigne, 'Of the Parthians arms', trans. Florio

It is a vitious, fond, fashion of the Nobility and Gentry of our age, and full of nice-tendernesse, never to betake themselves to armes, except upon some urgent and extreme necessitie: and to quit them as soone as they perceive the least hope or apparence that the danger is past; Whence ensue many disorders, and inconveniences: For, every one running and calling for his armes when the alarum is given, some have not yet buckled their cuirace when their fellowes are already defeated. Indeed our forefathers would have their Caske, Lance, Gantlets, and Shields carried, but so long as the service lasted, themselves would never leave-off their other peeces. Our troopes are now all confounded and disordered, by reason of bag and baggage, of carriages of lackies, and foot-boies, wh ich because of their masters armes they carry, can never leave them. *Titus Livius*, speaking of the French, saith, *Intolerantissima laboris corpora vix arma humeris gerebant* (LIV. Dec. i. 10.). *'Their bodies most impatient of labour could hardly beare armour on their backes.'* Divers Nations, as they did in former times, so yet at this day, are seene to goe to the warres, without any thing about them, or if they had, it was of no defence; but were all naked and bare.

Tegmina quas capitum raptus de suber e cortex. -- VIR. *Æn*. 1. 742.
Whose caske to cover all their head,
Was made of barke from Corke-tree flea'd.

Alexander, the most daring and hazardous Captain that ever was, did very seldome arme himselfe: And those which amongst us neglect them, doe not thereby much empaire their reputation. If any man chance to be slaine for want of an armour, there are as many more that miscarry with the over-heavy burthen of their armes, and by them are engaged, and by a counterbutte are brused, or otherwise defeated. For in truth to see the unweildy weight of our and their thicknesse, it seemeth we but endevour to defend our selves, and we are rather charged than covered by them. We have enough to doe to endure the burthen of them, and are so engived and shackled in them, as if we were to fight but with the shocke or brunt of our armes, and as if we were as much bound to defend them as they to shield us. *Cornelius Tacitus* doth pleasantly quip and jest at the men of war of our ancient Gaules, so armed, only to maintaine themselves, as they that have no meane either to offend or to be offended, or to raise themselves being overthrowne. *Lucullus* seeing certaine Median men at armes, which were in the front of *Tigranes* Army, heavily and unweildily armed, as in an iron prison, apprehended thereby an opinion that he might easily defeat them, and began to charge them first, and got the victory. And now that our Muskettiers, are in such credit, I thinke we shall have some invention found to immure us up, that so we may be warranted from them, and to traine us to the warres in Skonces and Bastions, as those which our fathers caused to be carried by Elephants. A humour farre different from that of *Scipio* the younger, who sharply reprooved his souldiers because they had scattered certaine Calthropes under the water alongst a dike, by which those of the Towne that he had besieged might sally out upon him, saying, that *those which assailed should resolve to enterprise and not to feare:* And had some reason to feare that this provision might secure and lull their vigilancy asleepe to guard themselves. Moreover he said to a young man, that shewed him a faire shield he had, '*Indeed good youth, it is a faire one; but a Roman souldier ought to have more confidence in his right hand than in his left.'* It is onely custome that makes the burthen of our armes intolerable unto us.

vi) Samuel Daniel, ‘To my dear friend M. John Florio’ (1603)

Bookes the amasse of humors, swolne with ease,
The Griefe of peace, the maladie of rest,
So stuffe the world, falne into this disease,
As it receives more than it can digest:
And doe so evercharge, as they confound
The apetite of skill with idle store:
There being no end of words, nor any bound
Set to conceipt, the Ocean without shore.
As if man labor'd with himself to be
As infinite in words, as in intents,
And draws his manifold incertaintie
In ev'ry figure, passion represents;
That these innumerable visages,
And strange shapes of opinions and discourse
Shadowed in leaves, may be the witnesses
Rather of our defects, then of our force.
And this proud frame of our presumption,
This Babel of our skill, this Towre of wit,
Seemes onely chekt with the confusion
Of our mistakings, that dissolveth it.
And well may make us of our knowledge doubt,
Seeing what uncertainties we build upon,
To be as weake within booke or without;
Or els that truth hath other shapes then one.

[…]

Which to discover this great Potentate,
This Prince Montaigne (if he be not more)
Hath more adventur'd of his owne estate
Than ever man did of himselfe before:
And hath made such bolde sallies out upon
Custome, the mightie tyrant of the earth,
In whose Seraglio of subjection
We all seeme bred-up, from our tender birth;
As I admire his powres, and out of love,
Here at his gate do stand, and glad I stand
So neere to him whom I do so much love,
T'applaude his happie setling in our land:
And safe transpassage by his studious care
Who both of him and us doth merit much,
Having as sumptuously, as he is rare
plac'd him in the best lodging of our speach.
And made him now as free, as if borne here,
And as well ours as theirs, who may be proud
That he is theirs, though he he be every where
To have the franchise of his worth allow'd.

It being the portion of a happie Pen,
Not to b'invassal'd to one Monarchie,
But dwells with all the better world of men
Whose spirits are all of one communitie.
Whom neither Ocean, Desarts, Rockes nor Sands
Can keepe from th'intertraffique of the minde,
But that it vents her treasure in all lands,
And doth a most secure commercement finde.

Wrap Excellencie up never so much,
In Hierogliphicques, Ciphers, Caracters,
And let her speake nver so strange a speach,
Her Genius yet finds apt decipherers:
And never was she borne to dye obscure,
But guided by the Starres of her owne grace,
Makes her owne fortune, and is aever sure
In mans best hold, to hold the strongest place.
And let the Critic say the worst he can,
He cannot say but that Montaige yet,
Yeeldes most rich pieces and extracts of man;
Though in a troubled frame confus'dly set.
Which yet h'is blest that he hath ever seene,
And therefore as a guest in gratefulnesse,
For the great good the house yeelds him within
Might spare to taxe th'unapt convayances.
But this breath hurts not, for both worke and frame,
Whilst England English speakes, is of that store
And that choyse stuffe, as that without the same
The richest librarie can be but poore.
And they unblest who letters do professe
And have him not: whose owne fate beates their want
With more sound blowes, then Alcibiades
Did his pedante that did Homer want.

Francis Bacon, *Essays; Or, Counsels Civil and Moral* (1612; 1625)

i) *from* I. '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 freewill 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 schools 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 daylight, 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 dæmonum," because it filleth 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 settleth 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 falsehood 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 as to say 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.”

ii) *from* XLVI. ‘Of Gardens’

God Almighty first planted a garden; and, indeed, it is the purest of human pleasures; it is the greatest refreshment to the spirits of man; without which buildings and palaces are but gross handyworks; and a man shall ever see, that, when ages grow to civility and elegancy, men come to build stately, sooner than to garden finely; as if gardening were the greater perfection. I do hold it, in the royal ordering of gardens, there ought to be gardens for all the months in the year, in which, severally, things of beauty may be then in season. For December, and January, and the latter part of November, you must take such things as are green all winter: holly, ivy, bays, juniper, cypress-trees, yew, pineapple-trees; fir-trees, rosemary, lavender; periwinkle, the white, the purple, and the blue; germander, flags, orange-trees, lemon-trees, and myrtles, if they be stoved; and sweet marjoram, warm set. There followeth, for the latter part of January and February, the mezereon-tree, which then blossoms; crocus vernus, both the yellow and the gray; primroses, anemones, the early tulip, the hyacinthus orientalis, chamaïris fritellaria. For March, there come violets, especially the single blue, which are the earliest; the yellow daffodil, the daisy, the almond-tree in blossom, the peach-tree in blossom, the cornelian-tree in blossom, sweet-brier. In April, follow the double white violet, the wall-flower, the stock-gillyflower, the cowslip, flower-de-luces, and lilies of all natures; rosemary flowers, the tulip, the double peony, the pale daffodil, the French honeysuckle, the cherry-tree in blossom, the damascene and plum-trees in blossom, the white thorn in leaf, the lilac-tree. In May and June come pinks of all sorts, especially the blush-pink; roses of all kinds, except the musk, which comes later; honeysuckles, strawberries, bugloss, columbine, the French marigold, flos Africanus, cherry-tree in fruit, ribes, figs in fruit, rasps, vine-flowers, lavender in flowers, the sweet satyrian, with the white flower; herba muscaria, lilium convallium, the apple-tree in blossom. In July come gillyflowers of all varieties, musk-roses, the lime-tree in blossom, early pears, and plums in fruit, genitings, codlins. In August come plums of all sorts in fruit, pears, apricots, barberries, filberts, musk-melons, monks-hoods, of all colors. In September come grapes, apples, poppies of all colors, peaches, melocotones, nectarines, cornelians, wardens, quinces. In October, and the beginning of November, come services, medlars, bullaces, roses cut or removed to come late, hollyoaks, and such like. These particulars are for the climate of London; but my meaning is perceived, that you may have “ver perpetuum,” as the place affords.

Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621)

i) *from* 'Democritus Junior to the Reader'

Portrait of Robert Burton by Gilbert Jackson, 1635.
Brasenose College, Oxford.

I might indeed, (had I wisely done) observed that precept of the poet, ———*nonumque prematur in annum*, and have taken more care: or, as Alexander the physician would have done by lapis lazuli, fifty times washed before it be used, I should have revised, corrected and amended this tract; but I had not (as I said) that happy leisure, no amanuenses or assistants. Pancrates in Lucian, wanting a servant as he went from Memphis to Coptus in Egypt, took a door bar, and after some superstitious words pronounced (Eucrates the relator was then present) made it stand up like a serving-man, fetch him water, turn the spit, serve in supper, and what work he would besides; and when he had done that service he desired, turned his man to a stick again. I have no such skill to make new men at my pleasure, or means to hire them; no whistle to call like the master of a ship, and bid them run, &c. I have no such authority, no such benefactors, as that noble Ambrosius was to Origen, allowing him six or seven amanuenses to write out his dictates; I must for that cause do my business myself, and was therefore enforced, as a bear doth her whelps, to bring forth this confused lump; I had not time to lick it into form, as she doth her young ones, but even so to publish it, as it was first written *quicquid in buccam venit*, in an extemporean style, as I do commonly all other exercises, *effudi quicquid dictavit genius meus*, out of a confused company of notes, and writ with as small deliberation as I do ordinarily speak, without all affectation of big words, fustian phrases, jingling terms, tropes, strong lines, that like Acesta's arrows caught fire as they flew, strains of wit, brave heats, elegies, hyperbolical exornations, elegancies, &c., which many so much affect. I am *aquae potor*, drink no wine at all, which so much improves our modern wits, a loose, plain, rude writer, *ficum, voco ficum et ligonem ligonem* and as free, as loose, *idem calamo quod in mente*, I call a spade a spade, *animis haec scribo, non auribus*, I respect matter not words; remembering that of Cardan, *verba propter res, non res propter verba*: and seeking with Seneca, *quid scribam, non quemadmodum*, rather *what* than *how* to write: for as Philo thinks, He that is conversant about matter, neglects words, and those that excel in this art of speaking, have no profound learning,

Verba nitent phaleris, at nullus verba medullas
Intus habent———

Besides, it was the observation of that wise Seneca, when you see a fellow careful about his words, and neat in his speech, know this for a certainty, that man's mind is busied about toys, there's no solidity in him. *Non est ornamentum virile concinnitas*: as he said of a nightingale, ———*vox es, praeterea nihil*, &c. I am therefore in this point a professed disciple of Apollonius a scholar of Socrates, I neglect phrases, and labour wholly to inform my

reader's understanding, not to please his ear; 'tis not my study or intent to compose neatly, which an orator requires, but to express myself readily and plainly as it happens. So that as a river runs sometimes precipitate and swift, then dull and slow; now direct, then *per ambages*, now deep, then shallow; now muddy, then clear; now broad, then narrow; doth my style flow: now serious, then light; now comical, then satirical; now more elaborate, then remiss, as the present subject required, or as at that time I was affected. And if thou vouchsafe to read this treatise, it shall seem no otherwise to thee, than the way to an ordinary traveller, sometimes fair, sometimes foul; here champaign, there enclosed; barren, in one place, better soil in another: by woods, groves, hills, dales, plains, &c. I shall lead thee *per ardua montium, et lubrica valllum, et roscida cespitum, et glebosa camporum*, through variety of objects, that which thou shalt like and surely dislike.

ii) ***from*** **'Democritus Junior to the Reader'**

The matter is theirs most part, and yet mine, *apparet unde sumptum sit* (which Seneca approves), *aliud tamen quam unde sumptum sit apparet*, which nature doth with the aliment of our bodies incorporate, digest, assimilate, I do *concoquere quod hausi*, dispose of what I take. I make them pay tribute, to set out this my Maceronicon, the method only is mine own, I must usurp that of Wecker *e Ter. nihil dictum quod non dictum prius, methodus sola artificem ostendit*, we can say nothing but what hath been said, the composition and method is ours only, and shows a scholar. Oribasius, Aesius, Avicenna, have all out of Galen, but to their own method, *diverso stilo, non diversa fide*. Our poets steal from Homer; he spews, saith Aelian, they lick it up. Divines use Austin's words verbatim still, and our story-dressers do as much; he that comes last is commonly best,

———donec quid grandius aetas
Postera sorsque ferat melior.———

Though there were many giants of old in physic and philosophy, yet I say with Didacus Stella, A dwarf standing on the shoulders of a giant may see farther than a giant himself; I may likely add, alter, and see farther than my predecessors; and it is no greater prejudice for me to indite after others, than for Aelianus Montaltus, that famous physician, to write *de morbis capitis* after Jason Pratensis, Heurnius, Hildesheim, &c., many horses to run in a race, one logician, one rhetorician, after another. Oppose then what thou wilt,

Allatres licet usque nos et usque
Et gannitibus improbis lacessas.

I solve it thus. And for those other faults of barbarism, Doric dialect, extemporanean style, tautologies, apish imitation, a rhapsody of rags gathered together from several dunghills, excrements of authors, toys and fopperies confusedly tumbled out, without art, invention, judgment, wit, learning, harsh, raw, rude, fantastical, absurd, insolent, indiscreet, ill-composed, indigested, vain, scurrile, idle, dull, and dry; I confess all ('tis partly affected), thou canst not think worse of me than I do of myself. 'Tis not worth the reading, I yield it, I desire thee not to lose time in perusing so vain a subject, I should be peradventure loath myself to read him or thee so writing; 'tis not *operae, pretium*. All I say is this, that I have precedents for it, which Isocrates calls *perfugium iis qui peccant*, others as absurd, vain, idle, illiterate, &c. *Nonnulli alii idem fecerunt*; others have done as much, it may be more, and perhaps thou thyself, *Novimus et qui te*, &c. We have all our faults; *scimus, et hanc,*

veniaim, &c.; thou censurest me, so have I done others, and may do thee, *Cedimus inque vicem*, &c., 'tis *lex talionis, quid pro quo*. Go now, censure, criticise, scoff, and rail.

iii) *from* 'Democritus Junior to the Reader'

Yea, but you will infer that this is *actum agere*, an unnecessary work, *cramben bis coctam apponnere*, the same again and again in other words. To what purpose? Nothing is omitted that may well be said, so thought Lucian in the like theme. How many excellent physicians have written just volumes and elaborate tracts of this subject? No news here; that which I have is stolen, from others, *Dicitque mihi mea pagina fur es*. If that severe doom of Synesius be true, it is a greater offence to steal dead men's labours, than their clothes, what shall become of most writers? I hold up my hand at the bar among others, and am guilty of felony in this kind, *habes confitentem reum*, I am content to be pressed with the rest. 'Tis most true, *tenet insanabile multos scribendi cacoethes*, and there is no end of writing of books, as the wiseman found of old, in this scribbling age, especially wherein the number of books is without number, (as a worthy man saith,) presses be oppressed,and out of an itching humour that every man hath to show himself, desirous of fame and honour (*scribimus indocti doctique*——) he will write no matter what, and scrape together it boots not whence. Bewitched with this desire of fame, *etiam mediis in morbis*, to the disparagement of their health, and scarce able to hold a pen, they must say something, and get themselves a name, saith Scaliger, though it be to the downfall and ruin of many others. To be counted writers, *scriptores ut salutentur*, to be thought and held polymaths and polyhistors, *apud imperitum vulgus ob ventosae nomen artis*, to get a paper-kingdom: *nulla spe quaestus sed ampla famae*, in this precipitate, ambitious age, *nunc ut est saeculum, inter immaturam eruditionem, ambitiosum et praeceps* ('tis Scaliger's censure); and they that are scarce auditors, *vix auditores*, must be masters and teachers, before they be capable and fit hearers. They will rush into all learning, *togatam armatam*, divine, human authors, rake over all indexes and pamphlets for notes, as our merchants do strange havens for traffic, write great tomes, *Cum non sint re vera doctiores, sed loquaciores*, whereas they are not thereby better scholars, but greater praters. They commonly pretend public good, but as Gesner observes, 'tis pride and vanity that eggs them on; no news or aught worthy of note, but the same in other terms. *Ne feriarentur fortasse typographi vel ideo scribendum est aliquid ut se vixisse testentur*. As apothecaries we make new mixtures everyday, pour out of one vessel into another; and as those old Romans robbed all the cities of the world, to set out their bad-sited Rome, we skim off the cream of other men's wits, pick the choice flowers of their tilled gardens to set out our own sterile plots. *Castrant alios ut libros suos per se graciles alieno adipe suffarciant* (so Jovius inveighs.) They lard their lean books with the fat of others' works.

Margaret Cavendish. *The World's Olio* (1655)

Short Eſſayes.

1. AS the Nightingale is the Bird of the Spring; ſo the Fly is the Bird of the Summer.

2. There would be no Twilight if there were no Clouds: for the Clouds are like the Wieck of a Candle.

3. Platonick Love is a Bawd to Adultery; ſo Romancy, and the like.

4. If a Woman gets a ſpot in her Reputation, ſhe can never rub it out.

5. It is the greateſt ſtudy in the Life of a Chaſt Woman, to keep her Reputation and Fame unſpotted: for Innocency is oft ſcandalized amongſt the Tongues of the Malicious.

6. Womens Thoughts ſhould be as pure as their Looks; Innocent, Noble, Honourable, Worthy, and Virtuous, are words of Praiſes, more proper for Women, than Gallant, Brave, Forward Spirits; theſe are too Maſculine Praiſes for the Effeminat Sex.

7. Men ſhould follow Reaſon and Truth, as the Flower that turns to the Sun.

8. Pockholes take away the gloſs of Youth from a Face.

9. Some give Women more Praiſes than their Modeſty dares countenance.

10. True Affection is not to be meaſured, becauſe it is like Eternity, not to be comprized.

11. Thoſe that would be Honoured, muſt have Noble Civilities, Gratefull Performances, Generous Liberalities, and Charitable Compaſſions.

 12. A

12. A Man may be as ſoon diſhonoured by the Indiſcretion of his Wife, as by her Diſhoneſty.

13. It is better to live with Liberty, than with Riches.

14. With Virtue, than with Beauty.

15. With Love, than with State.

16. With Health, than with Power.

17. With Wit, than with Company.

18. With Peace, than with Fame.

19. With Beaſts, than with Fools.

20. There is no Sound ſo unpleaſing, as to hear Amorous Lovers, or Fools, ſpeak.

21. There is no Sight ſo unpleaſant, as Affectation.

22. A Gracefull Motion ſets forth a Homely Perſon, and wins more Affection than the rareſt Beauty that Nature ever made.

23. Wit, and *bon Miene*, and Civility, take more than Beauty, and gay Clothing.

24. Pride without State, doth as ill as State without Civility.

25. It is better to hear Senſe in mean Phraſes, than Phraſes without Senſe.

26. A Man ſhould alwaies wear his Life for the ſervice of his Honour.

27. Men ſhould have Variety in nothing, but Gainfull Knowledge.

28. It is proper for a Gentleman to have a *bon Miene*, to be Civil, and Converſible in Diſcourſe, to know Men and Manners.

29. It is more proper for a Gentleman to be active in the uſe of Arms, than in the Art of Dancing; for a Gallant Man hath more uſe of his Arms than his Heels.

30. It is more proper for a Gentleman to learn Fortification than Grammar: But what pains will a Man take in learning ſeveral Languages, wherein their Tongues are exerciſed, and neglect that Learning that ſhould maintain their Honour? which is, the Sword; the one doth but trouble their Heads, and overcharge their Memories; the other gets Honour, and ſaves their Lives; the one is onely proper for Scholaſtical Pedants, the other for Heroick Spirits.

31. A Man ſhould court his Sword as his Miſtris, and ſtudy to learn its Virtue, and love it as his Friend, which defends his Honour, to revenge his Quarrels, and guard him from his Enemies.

32. For he is the more Gallant Man that hath a Generous Mind, a Valiant Heart, than he that hath only a Learned Head; the firſt is Noble, the other Pedantical; the one gives, the other receives.

33. It becomes a Gentleman rather to love Horſes and Weapons, than to fiddle and dance.

34. And he is not worthy the name of a Gentleman, that had rather come Sweating from a Tennis-Court, than Bleeding from a Battel.

35. Men

i) *Of several Opinions. Essay 125.*

Several Opinions, except it be in Religion, do no harm, if no good; for Opinions are The greatest entertainers of Time, and a chief Companion in mans life; for Opinions are Chatting Gossips, to pass away The idle time; for although Man complains of The shortenss of Life, and swiftness of Time, yet he hath Most commonly more than he can well tell how to spend his Life with; for Most men seek waies to pass Time withall; and if The World were equally, amongst Mankind and Industry, divided, yet he would find little Variety of Imployment; so that Mans Life is busied more with Thoughts than Actions.

The strength of erroneous Opinions. Essay 126.

HOW strong did men believe against The Antipodes, as one man believing such a thing to be, was put out of his Liveing, when in after Ages it was found a Truth? How strongly did Many Ages believe that The Torrid Zone, or Ecliptick Line, was not Habitable, which now is found The Most temperate Climate? How strongly did Europe believe that all The World was discovered, and yet afterwards so much found out, as it seemed another World? and Many believi'd that The Earth was flat and not round, but Cavendish, Drake, and others, rectified that Error; and Many other Examples might be given. So that Opinions are alwaies in War, with Factious Sidings, and men become Their Champions either with The Pen or Sword; but The ignorant men are The stronger in Their belief in Opinions; for searching gives Doubts, aswell as discovereth The Truth, and it is Doubts that disturb The Peace, either of The Mind or otherwaies, when Truth commonly closeth all differrences; so men travell in Their

Thoughts to spy out The Secrets of Nature, and find out Reason, to perswade Them to new Opinions, which may be as far from The Truth, as The old ones which They sling off; for Nature is too various to be known, and her Curiosities too subtil to be understood; but men are so strangely delighted with what is new, that Those men that have found a new Opinion are absolute to judge and rule over all others; such Reputation Singularity begets.

ii) ***The strength of Opinions. Essay 127.***

SO strongly do men wedge or rivet Opinions with The Hammer of a confident belief, that it is, in Many, impossible to remove Them fro thm, though They are Most ridiculous & foolish, but especially when They are begot of Their own Brains, and all Those that do not adhere to Them shall be accompted as Their Enemies; So much doth Opinion sway and rule in The mind of Man more than Truth doth; for though Some Opinions jump upon Truth, yet it is a thousand to one when They meet; And when The Truth is found, it is no longer an Opinion, but Knowledge; yet it is less esteemed when it is found, which makes that Saying true, That Ignorance is The Mother of Admiration, which Admiration begets an Esteem, and sets a Value upon They know not what: Wherefore he is a very wise man, that can rule his Opinions with Reason, and not let his Opinion overbear his Reason, and to lead him from himself; Yet Opinions should not be sleighted nor contemned without Examination or Triall, though They be never so strange and unlikely, untill The Errour be found out; but not to rely upon Them, or to be so bound that They will make no question against Them; for an Opinion is but a guesse of what may be a Truth; but men should be as free to Opinions as Opinions to Them, to let Them come and go at pleasure.

iii) ***Of The Senses. Essay 131.***

AND those that have Their Senses perfect and much imployed with Varieties, must needs know more than Those that have Them defective, or not practised; yet The Senses make not The Understanding, but The Brain; and not The Brain only, but such a tempered Brain, or such a moved Brain; But Some Brains move like Pulses, Some being distempered, as beating either too slow or too quick; but when The Brain moves even and strong, it shews a healthfull Understanding; when it moves even, strong, and quick, it shews There is much spirit of Fancy, or blood of Invention.

iv) ***The variety of Wit. Essay 134.***

Mercury is feigned The Patron of Theeves, because Mercury is Eloquent, and Eloquence steals away The Hearts of men by consenting to follow after The perswasions of Rhetorick; so he is feigned to be The Most talkative God, because The chief part of Rhetorick lies in The use of The Tongue. wit is The God of Fancy, a world of Arts, a Recreation to time, a Disposer of Passions; it sweetens Melancholy, dresses Joy; it quenches Fears, raiseth Hopes, easeth Pains; an Orator of Love, and a Denier of Lust; it mourns with Sorrow, mends Faults; it moves Compassion, begs Pardon; a Perswader to Virtue, an Adornment to Beauty, a Veil to Imperfection, The Delight of Life, Musick to The Ears, a Charm to The Senses; it is a Child of The Brain; it is begot by Experience, and fed with Heat. wit is like Proteus in several Forms, as The Arms of Mars, Joves Thunderbolt, Neptunes Trident, Plutes Cerberus, Vulcans Net, Pallass Lance, Apollos Harp, Circes Wand, Minervas Loom, Mercuries Rod, Venus Doves, Pans Pipe, Cupids Arrow, The Center of The Earth; it is Boreas to Raise Storms, it is Zephyrus to refresh, it is Revenges Sword, and Deaths Sith, Glories Throne, Beauties Pencil,

Oblivions Resurrection, The Worlds Delight, Lifes Guide, Loves Fire, Fames Trumpet, and The Mother of Nature. So he that hath a true-born wit hath all.

v) ***Of Translation. Essay 138.***

WE are given much, in this latter Age, to Translation, and though Translation is a good Work, because it doth not only divulge good Authors, but distributes Knowledge to The unlearned in Languages; yet Translators are but like Those that shew The Tombs at Westminster, or The Lyons at The Tower, which is but to be an Informer, not The Owner of Them.

Essay 139.
ALthough Accidents give The Ground to Some Arts, yet They are rude and uneasy untill The Brain hath polished Them over.
True it is, The Senses Most commonly give The Brain The matter to work on, yet The Brain forms and figures Those Materials, and disperses Them abroad, to The use of The World, by The Senses again: for as They came in at The Ear and The Eye, or The Taste, Sent, and Touch; so They are delivered out by The Tongue and Hands.

Essay 140.
It is worthy The Observation, to regard The odd Humours of Mankind, how They talk of Reason, and follow The way Thereof so seldome; for men may as easily set Rules to Eternity as to Themselves; for The Mind is so intricate and subtil, that we may as soon measure Eternity as it.

Of Dilation and Retention. Essay 141.
A Dilation causeth as much weakness as Contraction; Dilation causeth weakness by The Disuniting The United Forces, and setting Them at too great a Distance; and Contraction binds Them up too hard, not giving, as we vulgarly say, Elbow room.

Thomas Browne, *Hydriotaphia: Urne-Buriall, or a Brief Discourse of the Sepulchral Urnes Lately Found in Norfolk* (1658)

i) *from* Chapter I

In the deep discovery of the Subterranean world, a shallow part would satisfie some enquirers; who, if two or three yards were open about the surface, would not care to rake the bowels of *Potosi*, and regions towards the Centre. Nature hath furnished one part of the Earth, and man another. The treasures of time lie high, in Urnes, Coynes, and Monuments, scarce below the roots of some vegetables. Time hath endlesse rarities, and shows of all varieties; which reveals old things in heaven, makes new discoveries in earth, and even earth it self a discovery. That great Antiquity *America* lay buried for a thousand years; and a large part of the earth is still in the Urne unto us.

Though if *Adam* were made out of an extract of the Earth, all parts might challenge a restitution, yet few have returned their bones farre lower then they might receive them; not affecting the graves of Giants, under hilly and heavy coverings, but content with lesse then their owne depth, have wished their bones might lie soft, and the earth be light upon them; even such as hope to rise again, would not be content with centrall interrment, or so desperately to place their reliques as to lie beyond discovery, and in no way to be seen again; which happy contrivance hath made communication with our forefathers, and left unto our view some parts, which they never beheld themselves.

Though earth hath engrossed the name yet water hath proved the smartest grave; which in forty dayes swallowed almost mankinde, and the living creation; Fishes not wholly escaping, except the Salt Ocean were handsomely contempered by a mixture of the fresh Element.

Many have taken voluminous pains to determine the state of the soul upon disunion; but men have been most phantasticall in the singular contrivances of their corporall dissolution: whilest the sobrest Nations have rested in two wayes, of simple inhumation and burning.

That carnall interment or burying, was of the elder date, the old examples of *Abraham* and the Patriarchs are sufficient to illustrate; And were without competition, if it could be made out, that *Adam* was buried near *Damascus*, or Mount *Calvary*, according to some Tradition. God himself, that buried but one, was pleased to make choice of this way, collectible from Scripture-expression, and the hot contest between Satan and the Arch-Angel, about discovering the body of *Moses*. But the practice of Burning was also of great Antiquity, and of no slender extent. For (not to derive the same from *Hercules*) noble descriptions there are hereof in the Grecian Funerals of *Homer*, In the formall Obsequies of *Patrocles*, and *Achilles*; and somewhat elder in the *Theban* warre, and solemn combustion of *Meneceus*, and *Archemorus*, contemporary unto *Jair* the Eighth Judge of *Israel*. Confirmable also among the *Trojans*, from the Funerall Pyre of *Hector*, burnt before the gates of *Troy*, And the burning of *Penthisilea* the *Amazonean Queen*: and long continuance of that practice, in the inward Countries of *Asia*; while as low as the Reign of *Julian*, we finde that the King of *Chionia* burnt the body of his Son, and interred the ashes in a silver Urne.

The same practice extended also farre West, and besides *Herulians*, *Getes*, and *Thracians*, was in use with most of the *Celtæ, Sarmatians, Germans, Gauls, Danes, Swedes, Norwegians*; not to omit some use thereof among *Carthaginians* and *Americans*: Of greater Antiquity among the *Romans* then most opinion, or *Pliny* seems to allow. For (beside the old

Table Laws of burning or burying within the City, of making the Funerall fire with plained wood, or quenching the fire with wine.) *Manlius* the Consul burnt the body of his Son: *Numa* by speciall clause of his Will, was not burnt but buried; and *Remus* was solemnly burned, according to the description of *Ovid*.

Cornelius Sylla was not the first whose body was burned in *Rome*, but of the *Cornelian* Family, which being indifferently, not frequently used before; from that time spread, and became the prevalent practice. Not totally pursued in the highest runne of Cremation; For when even Crows were funerally burnt, *Poppæa* the Wife of *Nero* found a peculiar grave enterment. Now as all customes were founded upon some bottome of Reason, so there wanted not grounds for this; according to severall apprehensions of the most rationall dissolution. Some being of the opinion of *Thales*, that water was the originall of all things, thought it most equall to submit unto the principle of putrefaction, and conclude in a moist relentment. Others conceived it most natural to end in fire, as due unto the master principle in the composition, according to the doctrine of *Heraclitus*. And therefore heaped up large piles, more actively to waft them toward that Element, whereby they also declined a visible degeneration into worms, and left a lasting parcell of their composition.

Some apprehended a purifying virtue in fire, refining the grosser commixture, and firing out the Æthereall particles so deeply immersed in it. And such as by tradition or rationall conjecture held any hint of the finall pyre of all things; or that this Element at last must be too hard for all the rest; might conceive most naturally of the fiery dissolution. Others pretending no natural grounds, politickly declined the malice of enemies upon their buried bodies. Which consideration led *Sylla* unto this practise; who having thus served the body of *Marius*, could not but fear a retaliation upon his own; entertained after in the Civill wars, and revengeful contentions of *Rome*.

But as many Nations embraced, and many left it indifferent, so others too much affected, or strictly declined this practice. The *Indian Brachmans* seemed too great friends unto fire, who burnt themselves alive, and thought it the noblest way to end their dayes in fire; according to the expression of the Indian, burning himself at *Athens*, in his last words upon the pyre unto the amazed spectators, *Thus I make my selfe Immortall*.

But the *Chaldeans* the great Idolators of fire, abhorred the burning of their carcasses, as a pollution of that Deity. The *Persian Magi* declined it upon the like scruple, and being only sollicitous about their bones, exposed their flesh to the prey of Birds and Dogges. And the *Persees* now in *India*, which expose their bodies unto Vultures, and endure not so much as *feretra*or Beers of Wood, the proper Fuell of fire, are led on with such niceties. But whether the ancient *Germans* who burned their dead, held any such fear to pollute their Deity of *Herthus*, or the earth, we have no Authentick conjecture.

ii) *from* Chapter II

There is nothing strictly immortall, but immortality; whatever hath no beginning may be confident of no end. All others have a dependent being, and within the reach of destruction, which is the peculiar of that necessary essence that cannot destroy it self; And the highest strain of omnipotency to be so powerfully constituted, as not to suffer even from the power of it self. But the sufficiency of Christian Immortality frustrates all earthly glory, and the quality of either state after death, makes a folly of posthumous memory. God who can only destroy our souls, and hath assured our resurrection, either of our bodies or names hath directly promised no

duration. Wherein there is so much chance that the boldest Expectants have found unhappy frustration; and to hold long subsistence, seems but a scape in oblivion. But man is a Noble Animal, splendid in ashes, and pompous in the grave, solemnizing Nativities and Deaths with equall lustre, nor omitting Ceremonies of bravery, in the infamy of his nature.

Life is a pure flame, and we live by an invisible Sun within us. A small fire sufficeth for life, great flames seemed too little after death, while men vainly affected precious pyres, and to burn like *Sardanapalus*, but the wisedom of funerall Laws found the folly of prodigall blazes, and reduced undoing fires, unto the rule of sober obsequies, wherein few could be so mean as not to provide wood, pitch, a mourner, and an Urne.

Five Languages secured not the Epitaph of *Gordianus*; The man of God lives longer without a Tomb then any by one, invisibly interred by Angels, and adjudged to obscurity, though not without some marks directing humane discovery. *Enoch*and *Elias* without either tomb or buriall, in an anomalous state of being, are the great Examples of perpetuity, in their long and living memory, in strict account being still on this side death, and having a late part yet to act upon this stage of earth. If in the decretory term of the world we shall not all dye but be changed, according to received translation; the last day will make but few graves; at least quick Resurrections will anticipate lasting Sepultures; Some Graves will be opened before they are quite closed, and *Lazarus* will be no wonder. When many that feared to dye shall groane that they can dye but once, the dismall state is the second and living death, when life puts despair on the damned; when men shall wish the coverings of Mountaines, not of Monuments, and annihilation shall be courted.

While some have studied Monuments, others have studiously declined them: and some have been so vainly boisterous, that they durst not acknowledge their Graves; wherein *Alaricus* seems most subtle, who had a River turned to hide his bones at the bottome. Even *Sylla* that thought himself safe in his Urne, could not prevent revenging tongues, and stones thrown at his Monument. Happy are they whom privacy makes innocent, who deal so with men in this world, that they are not afraid to meet them in the next, who when they dye, make no commotion among the dead, and are not toucht with that poeticall taunt of *Isaiah*.

Pyramids, Arches, Obelisks, were but the irregularities of vain-glory, and wilde enormities of ancient magnanimity. But the most magnanimous resolution rests in the Christan Religion, which trampleth upon pride, and sets on the neck of ambition, humbly pursuing that infallible perpetuity, unto which all others must diminish their diameters, and be poorly seen in Angles of contingency.

Pious spirits who passed their dayes in raptures of futurity, made little more of this world, then the world that was before it, while they lay obscure in the Chaos of pre-ordination, and night of their fore-beings. And if any have been so happy as truly to understand Christian annihilation, extasis, exolution, liquefaction, transformation, the kisse of the Spouse, gustation of God, and ingression into the divine shadow, they have already had an handsome anticipation of heaven; the glory of the world is surely over, and the earth in ashes unto them.

To subsist in lasting Monuments, to live in their productions, to exist in their names, and prædicament of *Chymera*'s, was large satisfaction unto old expectations, and made one part of their *Elyziums*. But all this is nothing in the Metaphysicks of true belief. To live indeed is to be again our selves, which being not only an hope but an evidence in noble beleevers; 'Tis all one

to lye in S^{t} *Innocents* Church-yard, as in the Sands of *Ægypt*: Ready to be any thing, in the extasie of being ever, and as content with six foot as the Moles of *Adrianus*.

Lucan

——*Tabesne cadavera solvat*
An rogus haud refert.——

Abraham Cowley, *Several Discourses by way of Essays, in Verse and Prose*, first published in *Works* (1668)

i) 'The Garden', *To* J. Evelyn *Esquire.*

I never had any other desire so strong, and so like to Covetousness as that one which I have had always, that I might be master at last of a small house and large garden, with very moderate conveniencies ioyned to them, and there dedicate the remainder of my life only to the culture of them and study of Nature,

And there (with no design beyond my wall) whole and intire to lye,
In no unactive Ease, and no unglorious Poverty.

Or as *Virgil* has said, Shorter and Better for me, that I might there *Studiis florere ignobilis otii* (though I could wish that he had rather said, *Nobilis otii*, when he spoke of his own). But several accidents of my ill fortune have disappointed me hitherto, and do still, of that felicity; for though**15**I have made the first and hardest step to it, by abandoning all ambitions and hopes in this World, and by retiring fromthe noise of all business and almost company, yet I stick still in the Inn of a hired House and Garden, among Weeds and Rubbish; and without that plesantest work of Human Industry, the Improvement of something which we call (not very properly, but yet we call) Our Own. I am gone out from *Sodom*, but I am not yet arrived at my Little *Zoar. O let me escape thither* (*Is it not a Little one?*) *and my Soul shall live*. I do not look back yet; but I have been forced to stop, and make too many halts. You may wonder, Sir, (for this seems a little too extravagant and Pindarical for *Prose*) what I mean by all this Preface; It is to let you know, That though I have mist, like a Chymist, my great End, yet I account my affections and endeavours well rewarded by something **30**that I have met with by the By; which is, that they have procured to me some part in your kindness and esteem; and thereby the honour of having my Name so advantagiously recommended to Posterity, by the *Epistle* you are pleased to prefix to the most useful Book that has been written in that kind, and which is to last as long as Moneths and Years.

Among many other *Arts* and *Excellencies* which you enjoy, I am glad to find this Favourite of mine the most predominant, That you choose this for your Wife, though you have hundreds of other Arts for your Concubines; Though you know them, and beget Sons upon them all (to which you are rich enough to allow great Legacies) yet the issue of this seemes to be designed by you to the main of the Estate; you have taken most pleasure in it, and bestow'd most charges upon its Education: and I doubt not to see that Book, which you are pleased to Promise to the World, and of which you have given us a Large Earnest in your Calendar, as Accomplisht, as any thing can be expected from an *Extraordinary Wit*, and no ordinary Expences, and a long Experience. I know no body that possesses more private happiness then you do in your Garden; and yet no man who makes his happiness more publick, by a free communication of the Art and Knowledge of it to others. All that I my self am able yet to do, is onely to recommend to Mankind the search of that Felicity, which you Instruct them how to Find and to Enjoy.

ii) *from* 'Of Myself'

It is a hard and nice Subject for a man to write of himself, it grates his own heart to say any thing of disparagement, and the Readers Eares to hear any thing of praise from him. There is no danger from me of offending him in this kind; neither my Mind, nor my Body, nor my Fortune, allow me any materials for that Vanity. It is sufficient, for my own contentment, that

they have preserved me from being scandalous, or remarkable on the defective side. But besides that, I shall here speak of myself, only in relation to the subject of these precedent discourses, and shall be likelier thereby to fall into the contempt, then rise up to the estimation of most people. As far as my Memory can return back into my past Life, before I knew, or was capable of guessing what the world, or glories, or business of it were, the natural affections of my soul gave me a secret bent of aversion from them, as some Plants are said to turn away from others, by an Antipathy imperceptible to themselves, and inscrutable to mans understanding. Even when I was a very young Boy at School, instead of running about on Holy-daies and playing with my fellows; I was wont to steal from them, and walk into the fields, either alone with a Book, or with some one Companion, if I could find any of the same temper. I was then too, so much an Enemy to all constraint, that my Masters could never prevail on me, by any perswasions or encouragements, to learn without Book the common rules of Grammar, in which they dispensed with me alone, because they found I made a shift to do the usual exercise out of my own reading and observation. That I was then of the same mind as I am now (which I confess, I wonder at my self) may appear by the latter end of an Ode, which I made when I was but thirteen years old, and which was then printed with many other Verses. The Beginning of it is Boyish, but of this part which I here set down (if a very little were corrected) I should hardly now be much ashamed.

9.
This only grant me, that my means may lye
Too low for Envy, for Contempt too high.
Some Honor I would have
Not from great deeds, but good alone.
The unknown are better than ill known.
Rumour can ope' the Grave,
Acquaintance I would have, but when't depends
Not on the number, but the choice of Friends.

10.
Books should, not business entertain the Light,
And sleep, as undisturb'd as Death, the Night.
My House a Cottage, more
Then Palace, and should fitting be
For all my Use, no Luxury.
My Garden painted o're
With Natures hand, not Arts; and pleasures yield,
Horace might envy in his Sabine field.

11.
Thus would I double my Lifes fading space,
For he that runs it well, twice runs his race.
And in this true delight,
These unbought sports, this happy State,
I would not fear nor wish my fate,
But boldly say each night,
To morrow let my Sun his beams display,
Or in clouds hide them; I have liv'd to Day.

You may see by it, I was even then acquainted with the Poets (for the Conclusion is taken out of *Horace*;) and perhaps it was the immature and immoderate love of them which stampt first, or rather engraved these Characters in me: They were like Letters cut into the Bark of a young Tree, which with the Tree still grow proportionably. But, how this love came to be produced in me so early, is a hard question: I believe I can tell the particular little chance that filled my head first with such Chimes of Verse, as have never since left ringing there: For I remember when I began to read, and to take some pleasure in it, there was wont to lie in my Mothers Parlour (I know not by what accident, for she her self never in her life read any Book but of Devotion) but there was wont to lie *Spencers* Works; this I happened to fall upon, and was infinitely delighted with the Stories of the Knights, and Giants, and Monsters, and brave Houses, which I found every where there: (Though my understanding had little to do with all this) and by degrees with the tinckling of the Rhyme and Dance of the Numbers, so that I think I had read him all over before I was twelve years old, and was thus made a Poet as irremediably as a Child is made an Eunuch. With these affections of mind, and my heart wholly set upon Letters, I went to the University; But was soon torn from thence by that violent Publick storm which would suffer nothing to stand where it did, but rooted up every Plant, even from the Princely Cedars to Me, the Hyssop. Yet I had as good fortune as could have befallen me in such a Tempest; for I was cast by it into the Family of one of the best Persons, and into the Court of one of the best Princesses of the World. Now though I was here engaged in wayes most contrary to the Original design of my life, that is, into much company, and no small business, and into a daily sight of Greatness, both Militant and Triumphant (for that was the state then of the *English* and *French* Courts) yet all this was so far from altering my Opinion, that it onely added the confirmation of Reason to that which was before but Natural Inclination. I saw plainly all the Paint of that kind of Life, the nearer I came to it; and that Beauty which I did not fall in Love with, when, for ought I knew, it was reall, was not like to bewitch, or intice me, when I saw that it was Adulterate. I met with several great Persons, whom I liked very well, but could not perceive that any part of their Greatness was to be liked or desired, no more then I would be glad, or content to be in a Storm, though I saw many Ships which rid safely and bravely in it: A storm would not agree with my stomach, if it did with my Courage. Though I was in a croud of as good company as could be found any where, though I was in business of great and honourable trust, though I eate at the best Table, and enjoyed the best conveniences for present subsistance that ought to be desired by a man of my condition in banishment and publick distresses; yet I could not abstain from renewing my old School-boys Wish in a Copy of Verses to the same effect,

Well then; I now do plainly see
This busie World and I shall ne’re agree, *&c.*