

could not be seen, but all the rest of his belly could. In this way all of this imperfect child that was not attached, as the arms, buttocks, thighs, and legs, remained hanging and dangling on the other and might reach halfway down his legs. The nurse also told us that he urinated from both places. Moreover the limbs of this other were nourished and living and in the same condition as his own, except that they were smaller and thinner.

This double body and these several limbs, connected with a single head, might well furnish a favorable prognostic to the king that he will maintain under the union of his laws these various parts and factions of our state. But for fear the event should belie it, it is better to let it go its way, for there is nothing like divining about things past. ^c*So that, when things have happened, by some interpretation they are found to have been prophesied* [Cicero]. ^bAs they said of Epimenides that he prophesied backward.

I have just seen a shepherd in Médoc, thirty years old or thereabouts, who has no sign of genital parts. He has three holes by which he continually makes water. He is bearded, has desire, and likes to touch women.

^cWhat we call monsters are not so to God, who sees in the immensity of his work the infinity of forms that he has comprised in it; and it is for us to believe that this figure that astonishes us is related and linked to some other figure of the same kind unknown to man. From his infinite wisdom there proceeds nothing but that is good and ordinary and regular; but we do not see its arrangement and relationship. *What he sees often, he does not wonder at, even if he does not know why it is. If something happens which he has not seen before, he thinks it is a prodigy* [Cicero].

We call contrary to nature what happens contrary to custom; nothing is anything but according to nature, whatever it may be. Let this universal and natural reason drive out of us the error and astonishment that novelty brings us.

31 Of anger

^aPlutarch is admirable throughout, but especially where he judges human actions. We may see the fine things that he says in the comparison of Lycurgus and Numa, apropos of our great foolishness in abandoning children to the government and responsibility of their fathers.

^cMost of our states, as Aristotle says, leave to each man, in the manner of the Cyclopes, the guidance of their wives and children according to his own foolish and thoughtless fancy; and the Lacedaemonian and Cretan are almost the only ones which have committed the education of children to the laws. ^aWho does not see that in a state everything

depends on their education and nurture? And yet, without any discernment, they are left to the mercy of the parents, however foolish and wicked these may be.

Among other things, how many times have I had a good mind, as I passed along our streets, to set up some trick to avenge little boys that I saw being flayed, knocked down, and bruised by some father or mother in a fury and frenzy of anger! You can see the fire and rage coming out of their eyes—

^BBurning with rage within, they're borne
Down headlong, just like boulders from a mountain torn;
The ground gives way beneath, the hanging slope falls in

JUVENAL

(and according to Hippocrates, the most dangerous maladies are those which disfigure the face)—^Awith a cutting, explosive voice, often against one who has just left its nurse's breast. And then see them, lamed and made stupid with blows; and our justice taking no account of it, as if these maimings and dislocations were not happening to members of our commonwealth:

^B'Tis good you've given to the people and the state
A citizen, if for the state you make him fit,
In farming, war, or peace, doing his useful bit.

JUVENAL

^AThere is no passion that so shakes the clarity of our judgment as anger. No one would hesitate to punish with death a judge who had condemned his criminal through anger. Why is it any more permissible for fathers and schoolmasters to whip and chastise children when they are in anger? It is no longer correction, it is vengeance. Chastisement takes the place of a medicine for children; and would we tolerate a doctor who was incensed and angry with his patient?

To behave rightly, we ourselves should never lay a hand on our servants as long as our anger lasts. While our pulse beats and we feel emotion, let us put off the business. Things will truly seem different to us when we have quieted and cooled down. It is passion that is in command at first, it is passion that speaks, it is not we ourselves.

^BSeen through it, faults appear greater to us, like bodies seen through a mist. Let a hungry man use meat; but a man who wants to use punishment should neither hunger nor thirst for it.

^AAnd then, the punishments that are inflicted with deliberation and discernment are better received and with more benefit by him who suffers them. Otherwise he thinks he has been condemned unjustly by a man agitated by wrath and fury, and alleges in his own justification the extraordinary movements of his master, his inflamed face, his unaccustomed oaths, his excitement, and his heedless precipitancy:

^BThe veins grow black with blood, the whole face swells with ire,
More fiercely flash the eyes than with the Gorgon's fire.

OVID

^ASuetonius relates that when Lucius Saturninus¹ had been condemned by Caesar, what helped him most with the people (to whom he appealed) and made him win his case was the animosity and bitterness that Caesar had brought to that judgment.

Saying is one thing and doing is another. We must consider the preaching apart from the preacher. Those men have given themselves an easy game who, in our time, have tried to attack the truth of our Church through the vices of her ministers; she draws her testimony from elsewhere. It is a stupid way of arguing, which would throw all things back into confusion. A man of good morals may have false opinions, and a wicked man may preach the truth, yes, even a man who does not believe it. No doubt it is a beautiful harmony when doing and saying go together, and I do not want to deny that words are of greater authority and efficacy when actions follow.

As Eudamidas said on hearing a philosopher discourse on war: "These remarks are fine, but the man who is speaking them is not to be believed, for he does not have ears accustomed to the sound of the trumpet." And Cleomenes, hearing a rhetorician haranguing about valor, burst into loud laughter; and, when the other took offense, he said to him: "I would do the same if it were a swallow that was talking about it; but if it were an eagle, I would gladly hear him."

I observe in the writings of the ancients, it seems to me, that the man who says what he thinks strikes home much more forcefully than the man who pretends. Listen to Cicero speaking of the love of liberty, and listen to Brutus on the subject. The writings themselves ring out to you that the latter was a man to buy it at the price of life. Let Cicero, the father of eloquence, treat of the contempt of death, and let Seneca treat of it too. The former drags it out languidly, and you feel that he wants to persuade you of something of which he is not persuaded; he gives you no heart, for he has none himself. The other animates and inflames you. I never read an author, especially of those who treat of virtue and duties, that I do not inquire curiously what kind of a man he was.

^BFor the ephors at Sparta, seeing a dissolute man propose a useful piece of advice to the people, commanded him to be silent and asked a good man to claim the idea and propose it.

^APlutarch's writings, if we savor them aright, reveal him to us well enough, and I think I know him even into his soul; yet I wish we had some memoirs of his life. And I have embarked on this digression apropos of the gratitude I feel toward Aulus Gellius for having left us in writing this story about his character, which concerns my subject of anger. A slave of his, a bad and vicious man, but one whose ears were pretty well filled with the lessons of philosophy, having for some fault of his been stripped by Plutarch's command, at first muttered, while he was being whipped, that he was punished without reason and that he had done nothing. But finally, starting to shout and to abuse his master in

¹ Corrected in the 1595 edition to "Caius Rabirius."

good earnest, he reproached him with not being a philosopher, as he boasted: for he had often heard him say that it was ugly to get angry—indeed, he had written a book about it—and the fact that right then, all plunged in anger, he was having him so cruelly beaten, completely belied his writings. To which Plutarch, all coldly and sedately, said: “How is this, clown, by what do you judge that I am angry at this moment? Does my face, my voice, my color, my speech, give you any evidence that I am excited? I do not think that my eyes are wild, my face agitated, my voice terrifying. Am I red? Am I foaming at the mouth? Does any word escape me that I shall have to repent? Am I quivering? Am I trembling with rage? For I tell you, those are the true signs of anger.” And then, turning to the man who was flogging him, he said: “Go right on with your job while this fellow and I are arguing.” That is his story.

Archytas of Tarentum, coming back from a war in which he had been captain-general, found everything in a mess in his household, and his lands lying fallow through the bad management of his steward; and having sent for him, he said: “Go; if I were not angry I would thrash you properly!” Plato likewise, having grown hot against one of his slaves, gave Speusippus the job of chastising him, excusing himself from putting his hand to it himself on the grounds that he was angry. Charillus, a Lacedaemonian, said to a Helot who was behaving too insolently and boldly toward him: “By the gods, if I were not angry, I would have you put to death right now.”

It is a passion that takes pleasure in itself and flatters itself. How many times, when we have got in stride for a wrong reason, if we are offered some good defense or excuse, we are vexed even at truth and innocence! In this connection I remember an amazing example from antiquity. Piso, a person of notable virtue in everything else, having become incensed at one of his soldiers because, returning alone from foraging, he could give him no account of where he had left a companion of his, took it for certain that he had killed him, and promptly condemned him to death. As he was at the gibbet, along comes this lost companion. The whole army made a great celebration about it, and after many hugs and embraces by the two comrades the executioner took them both into the presence of Piso, everyone present expecting confidently that it would be a great pleasure to him also. But it was quite the reverse. For through shame and vexation his fury, which was still in power, doubled; and by a subtle trick that his passion promptly suggested to him, he made the three of them guilty because he had found one of them to be innocent, and had all three dispatched: the first soldier because there was a sentence against him; the second, who had gotten lost, because he was the cause of his companion's death; and the executioner for not having obeyed the command that had been given him.

³Those who have to deal with headstrong women may have experienced what a rage they are thrown into when we oppose silence and coldness to their agitation, and disdain to feed their rage. The

orator Coelius was prodigiously choleric by nature. To one who was supping in his company, a man gentle and mild in conversation and who, in order not to excite him, took the course of approving and assenting to everything he said, he, unable to endure his spleen venting itself thus without nourishment, said: "By all the gods, contradict me in something, will you, so that we may be two." Likewise the women get angry only so that we may get angry in turn, in imitation of the laws of love. Phocion, to a man who was interrupting his talk by abusing him violently, did nothing but be silent and give him full opportunity to exhaust his anger; this done, with no mention of this disturbance, he resumed his talk at the place where he had left off. There is no retort so stinging as such contempt.

Of the most choleric man in France (and anger is always an imperfection, but more excusable in a military man, for in that profession there are certainly occasions that cannot do without it) I often say that he is the most patient man I know in curbing his anger: it agitates him with such violence and fury—

So, when with crackling flames a caldron fries,
The bubbling waters from the bottom rise;
Above the brim they force their fiery way;
Black vapors climb aloft, and cloud the day.

VIRGIL

—that he has to constrain himself cruelly to moderate it. And for my part, I know of no passion that I could make such an effort to conceal and resist. I would not put wisdom at so high a price. I do not consider so much what he does as how much it costs him not to do worse.

Another was boasting to me of the self-control and mildness of his behavior, which is indeed singular. I said to him that it was indeed something, especially in people of eminent rank like himself, whom everyone watches, to present themselves always very even-tempered to the world; but that the main thing was to make provision for the inside and for oneself, and that to my taste it was not good management of one's affairs to eat one's heart out; which I was afraid he did in order to maintain this mask and this controlled appearance on the outside.

We incorporate anger by hiding it; as Diogenes said to Demosthenes, who, for fear of being seen in a tavern, was drawing back further inside it: "The further back you go, the deeper in you go." I advise that we rather give our valet a slap on the cheek a little out of season than strain our inclination to represent this wise bearing. And I would rather produce my passions than brood over them at my expense; they grow languid when they have vent and expression. It is better that their point should operate outwardly than be turned against us. *°All vices are less weighty in the open, and most pernicious when they hide under an appearance of soundness [Seneca].*

^BI admonish those in my family who have the right to get angry,

first, to husband their anger and not expend it at random, for that impedes its effect and its weight. Heedless and continual scolding becomes a habit and makes everyone discount it. The scolding you give a servant for stealing is not felt, because it is the very same that he has heard you use against him a hundred times for a glass badly rinsed or a stool badly placed. Second, not to get angry in the air, and to see to it that their reprimand reaches the person they are complaining about: for ordinarily they are yelling before he is in their presence and continue yelling for ages after he has left,

And petulant madness with itself contends.

CLAUDIAN

They go after their own shadow, and carry this tempest into a place where no one is punished or affected by it, except someone who has to put up with the racket of their voice. I likewise condemn in quarrels those who bluster and fume without an opponent; these rodomontades must be kept for where they will strike home:

So roars the bull his challenge to the fight,
And of his furious horns he tries the might
Against a tree, and fiercely lashes out,
And paws the sand in prelude to the bout.

VIRGIL

When I get angry, it is as keenly, but also as briefly and privately, as I can. I do indeed lose my temper in haste and violence, but I do not lose my bearings to the point of hurling about all sorts of insulting words at random and without choice, heedless of whether I place my arrows pertinently where I think they will hurt the most (for I ordinarily use nothing but my tongue). My servants get off better on big occasions than small. The small ones take me by surprise, and bad luck will have it that once you are over the precipice it does not matter what gave you the push, you still go all the way to the bottom: the fall provides its own rushing and excitement and acceleration. On big occasions I have this satisfaction, that they are so just that everyone expects to see a reasonable anger engendered; I glory in deceiving their expectation. I tense and prepare myself against them; they disturb my brain and threaten to carry me away very far if I followed them. Easily I keep from getting into this passion, and I am strong enough, if I am expecting it, to repel its onslaught, however violent its cause; but if it once occupies and seizes me, it carries me away, however inane its cause.

This is how I bargain with those who may argue with me: When you sense that I am the first one excited, let me go my way, right or wrong; I will do the same for you in my turn. The tempest is bred only of the competition of angers, which are prone to produce one another, and are not born at the same moment. Let us give each one its head, and we shall always be at peace. A useful prescription, but hard to carry out.

Sometimes it also happens that I play angry for the governing of my house, without any real emotion. As age makes my disposition sourer, I make an effort to oppose it, and will succeed, if I can, in being henceforth all the less peevish and hard to please as I shall have more excuse and inclination to be so, although hitherto I have been among those who are least so.

^One more word to close this chapter. Aristotle says that anger sometimes serves as a weapon for virtue and valor. That is quite likely; yet those who deny it answer humorously that it is a weapon whose use is novel. For we move other weapons, this one moves us; our hand does not guide it, it guides our hand; it holds us, we do not hold it.

32 *Defense of Seneca and Plutarch*

^My familiarity with these personages and the help they give to my old age ^and my book, built up purely from their spoils, ^oblige me to espouse their honor.

As for Seneca, among a myriad of pamphlets which those of the so-called Reformed religion circulate in defense of their cause, and which sometimes come from good hands, so that it is a pity they are not busied on a better subject, I once saw one which, to enlarge and fill up the similarity he wants to find between the government of our late poor King Charles IX and that of Nero, compares the late Cardinal of Lorraine with Seneca: their fortune, in having both been the first men in the government of their princes, and at the same time their character, their condition, and their conduct. In which, in my opinion, he does great honor to the said Lord Cardinal. For although I am one of those who have the highest esteem for his mind, his eloquence, his zeal for religion and the service of his king, and his good fortune to have been born in a century where it was so novel and so rare, and at the same time so necessary for the public good, to have an ecclesiastical personage of such nobility and dignity competent and capable of his charge, yet, to confess the truth, I do not consider his capacity nearly so great, nor his virtue so clear and entire and firm, as Seneca's.

Now this book I am speaking of, to attain its purpose, makes a very insulting description of Seneca, having borrowed its slurs from Dion the historian, whose testimony I do not at all believe. For not only is he inconsistent, in that after having called Seneca now very wise and now a mortal enemy of Nero's vices, he elsewhere makes him avaricious, usurious, ambitious, effeminate, voluptuous, and playing the philosopher on false pretenses; but besides, Seneca's virtue shows forth so live and vigorous in his writings, and the defense is so clear there against