

Essays by Francis Bacon

Francis Bacon

1597–1628

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[Brackets] enclose editorial explanations. Small ·dots· enclose material that has been added, but can be read as though it were part of the original text. Occasional •bullets, and also indenting of passages that are not quotations, are meant as aids to grasping the structure of a sentence or a thought. Every four-point ellipsis indicates the omission of a brief passage that seems to present more difficulty than it is worth. Longer omissions are reported on, between [brackets], in normal-sized type. —The Preface is a letter to Bacon’s older brother Anthony, who was at that time still struggling with the chronic illnesses that killed him 18 months later. —The date-spread at the top of this page is for the Essays, which were re-issued (with changes) across those thirty years. Bacon’s personal dates were 1561–1626.

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Glossary

connivance: This comes from a Latin word meaning ‘wink’. Connivance occurs when someone in a position of authority pretends not to notice misbehaviour by a subordinate. The currently popular use of ‘connive’ to mean ‘conspire’ is a product of sheer ignorance.

conscience: Sometimes it means what we mean by it; quite often it means ‘thoughtfulness’.

contemn: In Bacon’s day, *as also today*, to ‘contemn’ something is to have (or express) contempt for it.

curious: Sometimes ‘attentive to detail’, sometimes ‘scientifically serious’.

deformed (deformity): In Bacon’s day, the dominant meaning was ‘ugly’ (ugliness).

dispatch: This word, especially in the essay of which it is the title, means something like ‘getting on with the business in hand’, or ‘promptness’.

donative: A cash hand-out to soldiers at the end of their term of service.

facility: For Bacon, someone’s facility in doing something is his smooth ability to do it well, though sometimes—notably in Essay 11—with a very strong suggestion that this is being put to use in trickery or treachery.

fair: Bacon uses this about twenty times in Essay 45 (‘Building’) and ten times in Essay 46 (‘Gardens’) and seldom elsewhere in these essays. For him it is a rather general but very strong evaluative term, covering ‘handsome’, ‘attractive’, ‘beautiful’ etc. (Most of Essay 45 is omitted from this version.)

Fame: (i) Goddess of rumour and gossip, or, derived from that, (ii) a general term for any state of affairs in which lies

and misrepresentations are running rampant through the society, to be distinguished from ‘tumults’ which involve rioting in the streets.

fortunate: As applied to people, it means here what we mean by it. As applied to events or states of affairs, it means something like ‘satisfactory (or better)’.

fortune: In these essays, someone’s ‘fortune’ is never a great sum of money; it is always his general level of welfare.

humour: Through much of the middle ages and on until Bacon’s day, human physiology was based on the theory that the workings of the human body depend on the interplay amongst four ‘humours’, = fluids; and that much sickness comes from an imbalance among these fluids or from the ‘corruption’ of one or more of them.

importune: ‘request forcefully’. Bacon also uses it as an adjective meaning ‘pushy’, ‘intrusive’. These days we would say ‘importunate’.

incorporate: ‘Combine or unite into one body or uniform substance’ [OED].

indifferent: Evenly balanced, neutral,

mean: (adjective) cheap, low-class, inelegant.

minister: When Bacon calls someone a ‘minister’, he means that the person is a servant; the term is applied, however, not to low-level household servants but rather to those whose service is some distance up the social scale.

mischief: Harm, possibly serious, caused by someone; similarly ‘mischievous’. In Bacon’s day, and certainly in his writings, it is not meant lightly, as though it were a matter of childish pranks.

model: When Bacon speaks of something's being the case on or according to someone's 'model', he means that it is the case by the standard set by that person.

pass over: To forgo. If you wrong me and I pass over revenge, that means that I don't try to harm you in return.

peculiar: Something that is 'peculiar to' x is something that pertains to x and to nothing else.

philosophy: Covers much of what we call 'science'. Similarly 'philosopher', 'philosophical'.

physic: Medicine, pharmaceutical drugs.

place: Especially but not only as used in essay 11, a 'place' is a position with power and responsibility in some enterprise which may be governmental, military or commercial. 'Great place' merely adds the qualification that the place is famous or conspicuous or the like. Bacon clearly thinks of places as graded and therefore open to competition.

plausible: Bacon nearly always uses this to mean 'pleasing' or 'popular'.

policy: Skill or thoughtfulness in the handling of practical matters.

politician: When Bacon speaks of someone's quality as a politician, he means that person's ability in the management of people, not necessarily of large numbers of people.

prince: In this work a 'prince' is a supreme leader. Any king may be called a prince.

speculative: In Bacon's day, the division between 'speculative' studies and 'practical' ones is the division between inquiries into what is the case and inquiries into what ought to be the case.

temporal: Literally it means 'having to do with time'; but in Bacon's day - and for some centuries before and after - it was often used in contrast to 'spiritual' or 'religious'. The idea was that the sphere of religion is *eternity* in some sense that excludes time.

vulgar: Working-class, uneducated, relatively ignorant and unthoughtful.

Preface

To my dear brother Mr Anthony Bacon

Loving and beloved brother, what I am doing here is like the conduct of someone who has an orchard in a bad neighbourhood, who gathers his fruit before it is ripe, to prevent stealing. These fragments of my thoughts were going to print. . . .¹ to let them pass would have been to risk the wrong they might receive from inaccurate copies or from some 'improvement'² which anyone who published them might be pleased to furnish them with. So I held it best to publish them as they passed long ago from my pen, without any further disgrace than the weakness of the author. For I have always maintained that unless a man's thoughts are of a certain nature, there might be as much vanity in retiring and withdrawing them from the world as in obtruding them. So in these particulars I have myself played Inquisitor, and find nothing to my understanding in them contrary or infectious to the state of religion or manners, but only ones that are (as I suppose) medecinable. Only I don't want now to publish them, because they will be like the recent new halfpence: good silver perhaps, but the pieces small. But since they refused to stay with their master but insisted on roaming, I have preferred them to *you*, who are next to myself. Dedicating them, such as they are, to our love, in the depth whereof (I assure you) I sometimes wish your infirmities were transferred to myself, so that her Majesty might have the service of such an active and able a mind as yours, and I might be excused for confining myself to

these contemplations and studies for which I am fittest. So I commend I you to the preservation of the Divine Majesty.

From your entirely loving brother, Francis Bacon. (30 January, 1597.)

1. Truth

What is truth? said jesting Pilate, and would not wait for an answer.³ There are indeed people who

a delight in giddiness,

b regard *fixing* their beliefs as a kind of bondage, and

c claim to have freewill in thinking as well as in acting.

There are no longer sects of *philosophers* [see Glossary] of whom this is true; but we still have *wits* who are of the same veins⁴ although there's not so much in them as there was in the veins of the ancients. But what brings lies in favour is not only how laborious and difficult it is for men to discover; and not that when truth is found it imposes on men's thoughts; but a natural though corrupt love of the lie itself. One of the later Greek schools examines the matter, and is baffled by the question of why men should love lies. For men in general lies are not a source of pleasure, as they are with poets; or of advantage, as they are for the merchant; a lie is loved for its own sake. . . . This same truth is a naked and open daylight, which doesn't show the masks

¹ [The ellipsis replaces the mystifying "To labour the staie of them had bin troublesome, and subiect to interpretation";]

² [Bacon writes 'garnishment', mainly a technical legal term which seems not to be any part of his meaning here.]

³ *John* 18:37–38.

⁴ [He means "to whom a, b and c apply"; but the "veins" metaphor is left in place because Bacon immediately carries on with it.]

and mummeries and triumphs of the world in half as stately and dainty a way as do the candle-lights of truth mixed with error. Truth may come to the price of a pearl, which shows best by day, but it won't rise to the price of a diamond or other gemstone that shows best in varied lights. A mixture of a lie always adds pleasure. If there were taken out of men's minds vain opinions, flattering hopes, false valuations, imaginations. . . and the like, it would leave the minds of many men poor shrunken things, full of melancholy and sickness, and unpleasing to themselves—does anyone doubt this? One of the Fathers⁵ in great severity called poesy 'the wine of evil spirits' because it fills the imagination yet does this only with the shadow of a lie. But what is really damaging is not •the lie that *passes through* the mind but •the one that *sinks and settles* in it. But however these things are thus in men's depraved judgments and attitudes, yet truth, which is the only judge of itself, teaches that

- the inquiry into truth, which is making love to it,
- the knowledge of truth, which is the presence of it, and
- the belief in truth, which is the enjoying of it,

is the chief good of human nature. The **first** thing God created. . . was the light of the visual sense⁶; the **last** was the light of reason⁷; and **his sabbath work ever since** has been the illumination of his Spirit. First, he breathed light onto the face of the world's matter, or chaos; then he breathed light into the face of man; and he still breathes and inspires light into the face of his chosen. The poet who beautified the sect that was otherwise inferior to the rest⁸ says excellently:

'It is a pleasure to stand on the shore and see ships

tossed upon the sea; a pleasure to stand in the window of a castle and to see a battle, looking down on the escapades it involves; but no pleasure is comparable to that of standing on 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, wanderings, mists and tempests in the vale below;'

so long as this view is accompanied by pity and not by the 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 who don't practise it—that clear and round dealing is the honour of man's nature, and that a mixture of falsehood is like alloy in a coin of gold and silver; it may make the metal easier to work with, but it lowers the value of the coin. For these winding and crooked courses are the goings of the serpent, which goes basely upon the belly, and not upon the feet. There is no vice that so covers a man with shame as to be found false and perfidious; and therefore Montaigne spoke well when he inquired why the word of the lie should be such a disgrace, and 'You are a liar!' should be such an odious charge. He says:

'If it be well weighed, to say that a man lies 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.' [Essays 2:10.]

Surely, the wickedness of falsehood and breach of faith

⁵ Augustine, *Confessions* 1:25-6

⁶ 'God said "Let there be light, and there was light"' (*Genesis* 1:3)

⁷ 'The Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul' (*Genesis* 2:7)

⁸ [Epicurus, Epicureans]

cannot possibly be so highly expressed as in that it shall be the last appeal in all the judgments of God upon the generations of men: it being foretold that 'when Christ comes he shall not find faith upon the earth' [Luke 18:8].

2. Death

Men fear death as children fear to go in the dark; and as that natural fear in children is increased with tales, so is the other. Certainly, the contemplation of death as the wages of sin and passage to another world is holy and religious; but the fear of it as a tribute to nature, is weak. Yet in religious meditations there is sometimes a mixture of vanity and of superstition. You'll read in some of the friars' books of mortification that a man should think within himself what the pain is if he merely has his finger's end pressed or tortured, and imagine from this what the pains of death are when the whole body is corrupted and dissolved; yet many times death happens with less pain than the torture of a limb, for the most vital parts are not the quickest of sense⁹. And by him who spoke only as a philosopher and natural man, it was well said *Pompa mortis magis terret, quam mors ipsa*.¹⁰ Groans and convulsions, a discoloured face, friends weeping, . . .and obsequies and the like show death as terrible. It is worth noting that no passion in the mind of man is so weak that it doesn't match up to

and master the fear of death; and therefore death is not such a terrible enemy when a man has so many attendants about him that can win the combat for him. Revenge triumphs over death; love slights it; honour aspires to it; grief flies to it; fear preoccupates it.¹¹

Indeed, we read that after the emperor Otho had slain himself, pity (which is the tenderest of affections) provoked many to die out of mere compassion for their sovereign, and as the truest sort of followers. And Seneca adds fastidiousness and satiety: *Cogita quamdiu eadem feceris; mori velle, non tantum fortis, aut miser, sed etiam fastidiosus potest*.¹²

It is no less noteworthy how little alteration in good spirits the approaches of death make: for they appear to be the same men till the last instant.

Augustus died in a compliment: *Livia, conjugii nostri memor, vive et vale*.¹³

Tiberius in dissimulation: *Jam Tiberium vires et corpus, non dissimulatio, deserebant*.¹⁴

Vespasian in a jest, sitting on the toilet, *Ut puto Deus fio*.¹⁵

Galba with a ·death· sentence, holding forth his neck: *Feri, si ex re sit populi Romani*.¹⁶ And from another source: *Adeste, si quid mihi restat agendum*.¹⁷

Certainly, the Stoics bestowed too much cost on death, and

⁹ [meaning 'when the parts most essential to life are not the most sensitive, the most apt to be subject to pain'.]

¹⁰ ['The array of the death-bed has more terrors than death itself [quoted from Seneca, as are other parts of this essay.]]

¹¹ [This should mean 'forestalls', 'takes it by surprise', or the like. It's not clear what Bacon's point can be on any reading.]

¹² 'Reflect how often you do the same things; a man may wish to die not so much because he is brave or because he is wretched, but because he is surfeited with life.'

¹³ 'Livia, mindful of our union, live on and fare thee well' [recorded by Suetonius].

¹⁴ 'His bodily strength and vitality were now forsaking Tiberius, but not his duplicity.' [Tacitus]

¹⁵ 'I am become a divinity, I suppose'.

¹⁶ 'If it be for the advantage of the Roman people, strike!'

¹⁷ 'If anything I ought to have done remains undone, dispatch!'

by their great preparations for it made it appear more fearful. They urged 'Pray for strong resolve, void of the fear of death, that reckons the closing period of life among the boons of nature.'

It is as natural to die as to be born; and to a little infant, perhaps, the one is as painful as the other. He who dies in an earnest pursuit is like one who is wounded in hot blood, who for a time hardly feels the hurt; and therefore a mind fixed and bent upon somthing that is good avoids the sorrows of death; . . . the sweetest canticle is *Nunc dimittis*, when a man has obtained worthy ends and expectations.¹⁸ . . .

3. Unity in Religion

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

(i) its fruits?

(ii) its limits?

(iii) its means?

(i) The chief fruit of church-unity is the well-pleasing of God, which is all in all. There are two others: (a) one brings benefit to those who are outside the church, (b) the other to those who are within. For the former, it is certain that heresies and schisms are the greatest scandals of all, worse even than corruption of conduct; for just as in the natural body a wound or solution of continuity¹⁹ is worse than a corrupt humour [see Glossary], so also in the spiritual body; so that nothing keeps men out of the church, and drives men out of it, as much as breach of unity does; and therefore, whenever it comes to that pass that one says *Ecce in deserto* and another says *Ecce in penetralibus*²⁰, that is, when some men seek Christ in the conventicles of heretics, and others in an outward face of a church, that voice needs continually to sound in men's ears, *nolite exire* [= 'Do not go out']. The doctor of the Gentiles (the propriety of whose vocation drew him to have a special care of those without) says: 'If a heathen comes in, and hears you speak with several tongues, will he not say that you are mad?'²¹ . . .

As for (b) the benefit for those who are within: it is *peace*, which contains infinite blessings; it establishes faith; it kindles charity; the outward peace of the church distills into peace of conscience, [see Glossary] and it turns the labours of writing and reading of controversies into treatises of mortification and devotion.

Concerning (ii) the limits of unity, the true placing of them is exceedingly important. There appear to be two extremes; for to certain zealots all speech of pacification

¹⁸ [This is from the song of Simeon, to whom it had been 'revealed that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. When he beheld the infant Jesus in the temple, he took the child in his arms and burst forth into a song of thanksgiving, commencing "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation"' [adapted from *Luke* 2:26–30.]

¹⁹ [a now-archaic term meaning 'the separation of parts normally continuous, by fracture, wounding, etc.']

²⁰ 'Behold he is in the desert' and 'Behold he is in the secret chambers' [both from *Matthew* 24:26]

²¹ [This roughly quotes *1 Corinthians* 14:23.]

is odious. 'Is it peace, Jehu? What do you have to do with peace? Turn behind me.' [2 Kings 9:18.] For these people, peace is not important; what matters is what party one follows or belongs to. At the other extreme, certain Laodiceans and lukewarm persons think they can accommodate points of religion by middle ways, taking both sides and cleverly reconciling them, as though they would bring about a settlement between God and man. To the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write: 'These things says the Amen, the faithful and true witness: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot; so then because thou art lukewarm. . . I will spew thee out of my mouth. Because you say 'I am rich, and increased with goods, and have no need of anything, and don't know that you are wretched and miserable, and poor and blind and naked, I advise you to buy from me

gold tried in the fire, so that you may be rich;
white clothing, so that the shame of your nakedness won't appear, and
eye-salve to anoint your eyes with, so that you may see.

Both these extremes are to be avoided; which will be done if the league of Christians, penned by our Saviour himself, were. . . soundly and plainly expounded: 'he who is not with us is against us' and again 'he who is not against us, is with us' [Matthew 12.30]; that is, if the points that are fundamental and of substance in religion were truly distinguished from points not merely of faith, but of opinion, order, or good intention. To many this may seem trivial, and done already; but if it were done less partially, it would be embraced more generally.

Of this I can give only this advice, according to my small model [see Glossary]. Men ought to take care to avoid splitting God's church by either of two kinds of controversies.

[A] One is when the matter of the controverted point is too small and light, not worth the heat and strife about it, kindled only by contradiction; for, as it is noted by one of the fathers, Christ's coat indeed had no seam, but the church's vesture was of various colours', whereupon he says '*In veste varietas sit, scissura non sit.*'²² Unity is not the same as uniformity.

[B] The other is when the matter of the controverted point is great, but it is driven to an over-great subtlety and obscurity, so that it becomes ingenious rather than substantial. A man who has judgment and understanding will sometimes hear ignorant men differ, and know well within himself that the differing parties mean one thing yet themselves would never agree; and if that happens in the distance of judgment there is between man and man, shall we not think that God above, who knows the heart of men, discerns²³ that frail men in some of their contradictions intend the same thing, and accepts both? The nature of such controversies is excellently expressed by St. Paul in the warning he gives concerning it: *Devita profanas vocum novitates, et oppositiones falsi nominis scienti.*²⁴

[Bacon now follows with a breathtakingly condensed sentence for which he offers no explanation:

'Men create oppositions which are not, and put them into new terms, so fixed as, whereas the meaning ought to govern the term, the term in effect governs the meaning.'

]

²² 'In the garment there may be many colours, but let there be no rending of it' [Matthew 12:30.]

²³ [Bacon wrote 'does not discern', but this must be a slip.]

²⁴ 'Avoid profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science, falsely so called' [1 Timothy 6:20]

There are also two false peaces, or unities; one where the peace is grounded only on an implicit ignorance, for all colours will agree in the dark; the other where <it is pieced up upon a direct admission of contraries in fundamental points>; for truth and falsehood in such things are like the iron and clay in the toes of Nebuchadnezzar's image; they may stick together but they will not incorporate [see Glossary]. [The clause between <angle-brackets> is thus marked because the maker of this version doesn't pretend to understand it.]

(iii) Concerning the means of procuring unity, men must beware that in the course of procuring or strengthening religious unity they don't dissolve and deface the laws of charity and of human society. There are two swords among Christians, the spiritual and temporal [see Glossary], and each has its proper role and place in the maintenance of religion; but we may not take up the third sword, which is Mahomet's sword,²⁵ or the like; that is, to propagat religion by wars or by bloody persecutions to force consciences; except in cases of overt scandal, blasphemy, or intermixture of practice against the state; much less to nourish seditions, to authorise conspiracies and rebellions, to put the sword into the people's hands, and the like, tending to the subversion of all government, which is the ordinance of God; for this is only to dash the first table of the laws against the second, considering men as Christians while forgetting that they are men. The poet Lucretius, when he beheld the act of Agamemnon in sacrificing his own daughter, exclaimed *Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum*.²⁶

What would he have said if he had known of the **a** massacre in France, or the **b** powder treason of England?²⁷ He would have been seven times more epicurean and atheist than he was; for as the temporal sword is to be drawn with great circumspection in cases of religion, so it is monstrous to put it into the hands of the common people; let that be left to the Anabaptists and other furies. It was great blasphemy when the devil said 'I will ascend and be like the Highest' [Isaiah 14:14]; but it is greater blasphemy to personate God, and bring him in saying 'I will descend, and be like the prince of darkness'; and *that* is the level that is reached when the cause of religion descends to the cruel and execrable actions of murdering princes [see Glossary], butchery of people, and subversion of states and governments.

Surely, this is to bring down the Holy Ghost in the shape of a vulture or raven instead of the likeness of a dove, and to display on the ship of a Christian church a flag of a ship of pirates and assassins. So it is most necessary that

- the church by doctrine and decree,
- princes by their sword, and
- all learnings, both Christian and moral, . . .

do damn and send to hell forever those facts and opinions tending to the support of the same, as has been already in good part done. Surely, in counsels concerning religion, that counsel of the apostle would be prefixed *Ira hominis non implet justitiam Dei* [The wrath of man does not work the righteousness of God'. . .]

²⁵ [Mahomet proselytized by giving to the conquered nations the option of the Koran or the sword.]

²⁶ ['To what dreadful deeds can someone be prompted to by religion.' He is referring to Agamemnon's sacrifice of his daughter Iphigenia, with the view of placating the goddess Diana and so getting fair winds for the journey of his fleet to Troy.]

²⁷ [Referring to **a** the massacre of protestants in France, on St. Bartholomew's day, 1572; and **b** the 'Gunpowder Plot' of 1605. in which catholics tried to assassinate King James I using explosives that would have destroyed Parliament.]

4. Revenge

Revenge is a kind of wild justice; the more man's nature runs to it, the more the law ought to weed it out. The first wrong only *offends against* the law, but the revenge for that wrong *takes over from* the law. In taking revenge, a man is merely *even with* his enemy, but in passing it over [see Glossary] he is his *superior*; for it is a prince's [see Glossary] part to pardon; and I am sure that Solomon says 'It is the glory of a man to pass by an offence'. That which is past is gone and irrevocable, and wise men have enough to do with things present and to come; so that those who labour over past matters merely trifle with themselves. When a man does a wrong, it is not for the wrong's sake but as a means to purchase for himself profit, or pleasure, or honour, or the like; so why should I be angry with a man for loving himself better than ·he loves· me? And if any man should do wrong merely out of ill-nature, that is like the thorn or briar, which prick and scratch because that is all they can do. The least bad sort of revenge is for wrongs which there is no law to remedy; but when a man seeks revenge ·in such a case· let him take care that his revenge is not one that there is no law to punish; otherwise, his enemy is still beforehand, and it is two for one.

Some, when they take revenge, want the offender to know where the revenge comes from. This is the more generous; for the revenge-taker's delight seems to be not so much in hurting the offender as in making him repent; but base and crafty cowards are like the arrow that flies in the dark. Cosimo, Duke of Florence, had a desperate [see Glossary] saying against perfidious or neglecting friends, as if those wrongs were unpardonable. 'You shall read', says he, 'that we are commanded to forgive our enemies; but you

never read that we are commanded to forgive our friends. But the spirit of Job was in a better tune: 'Shall we', says he, 'take *good* at God's hands, and not be content to take evil also?' [Job 2:10], and so of *friends* in proportion.

This is certain: a man who focuses on getting revenge keeps his own wounds green, when otherwise they would heal and do well.

Public revenges—i.e. punishments awarded by the state with the sanction of the laws—are for the most part fortunate [see Glossary]—for example, the revenge for the death of Cæsar, for the death of Pertinax, for the death of Henry III of France, and many more. But with private revenges it is not so; indeed, vindictive persons live the life of witches, who are mischievous [see Glossary] throughout their life and so end as unfortunate.

5. Adversity

It was a high speech of Seneca (after the manner of the Stoics) that 'the good things that belong to prosperity are to be wished, but the good things that belong to adversity are to be admired'.²⁸ Certainly, if miracles are the command over nature, they appear most in adversity. It is a still higher speech of his than the other (much too high for a heathen) 'It is true greatness to have in one ·person· the frailty of a man and the security of a God' (*Vere magnum habere fragilitatem hominis securitatem Dei* [ibid. 93]. . . . This is in effect the thing that is depicted in that strange fiction of the ancient poets, Stesichorus, Apollodorus and others, according to which the mighty hero Hercules sailed in a *cup*. . . . [Bacon goes on about this, saying that this supposed adventure of Hercules 'has some approach to the state of

²⁸ *Bona rerum secundarum optabilia, adversarum mirabilia* ['Letters to Lucilius' 56.]

a Christian', in that Hercules' journey resembles 'Christian resolution that sails in the frail bark of the flesh through the waves of the world'. He continues:]. . .The virtue of prosperity is temperance, the virtue of adversity is fortitude, which in morals is the more heroic virtue. Prosperity is the blessing of the Old Testament, adversity is the blessing of the New, which carries the greater benediction and the clearer revelation of God's favour. Yet even in the Old Testament, if you listen to David's harp, you will hear as many funereal airs as carols; and the pencil of the Holy Ghost has laboured more in describing the afflictions of Job than in describing the felicities of Solomon. Prosperity is not without many fears and unpleasantnesses; and adversity is not without comforts and hopes. We see in needleworks and embroideries that it is more pleasing to have a lively work on a sad and solemn ground than to have a dark and melancholy work on a lively ground; judge, therefore, of the pleasure of the heart by the pleasure of the eye. Certainly, virtue is like precious odours, most fragrant when they are incensed, or crushed; for prosperity best reveals vice, whereas adversity best reveals virtue.

6. Simulation and dissimulation

Dissimulation is only a faint kind of policy [see Glossary] or wisdom; for one needs **a** a strong wit and **b** a strong heart to **a** know when to tell the truth and **b** to act on it; therefore it is the weaker sort of politicians [see Glossary] who are the great dissemblers.

Tacitus says 'Livia was accurate about the arts of her husband and the dissimulation of her son, attributing arts

or policy to Augustus and dissimulation to Tiberius' [*Annals* v.1]; and again when Mucianus encourages Vespasian to take arms against Vitellius, he says 'We rise not against the piercing judgment of Augustus, nor the extreme caution or closeness of Tiberius' [*Histories* ii.75]. These properties of arts or policy, and dissimulation or closeness, are indeed different habits and faculties, and should be distinguished; for if a man has such penetration of judgment that he can discern

- which things are to be laid open and which to be hidden,
- what to be shown at half-lights, and
- to whom and when

(which are arts of state and arts of life, as Tacitus well calls them), then to him a habit of dissimulation is a hindrance and a poorness. But if a man cannot achieve that level of judgment, then it is left to him generally to be close, and a dissembler; for where a man cannot steer his way among *particulars*, it is good for him in those situations to take the safest and wariest way in *general*, like someone who goes softly because his eyesight is bad. Certainly, the ablest men who ever lived have all had an openness and frankness of dealing, and a reputation for certainty and veracity; but then they were like well-managed horses; for they could pretty well tell when to stop or turn; and at such times, when they thought the case indeed required dissimulation, if then they used it their widespread reputation for good faith and clearness of dealing made them almost invisible.²⁹

There are three degrees of this hiding and veiling of a man's self:

- (1) Closeness, reservation, and secrecy, when a man leaves himself without observation, or with no way for

²⁹ [Made *what* almost invisible? We must suppose that Bacon slightly lost his grip on this sentence, and that his 'them' was meant to refer to the shifts and evasions involved in the dissimulation.]

anyone to know what he is;

(2) Dissimulation in the negative, when a man lets fall signs and arguments that he is not what he is;

(3) Simulation in the affirmative, when a man industriously and expressly feigns and pretends to be what he is not.

(1) The first of these, **secretcy**, is the virtue of a confessor; and assuredly the secret man hears many confessions; ·others don't·, for who will open himself to a blab or a babbler? But if a man is thought to be secret, this invites discovery, as the more close air sucks in the more open; and—as in confession—the revealing is not for worldly use, but for the ease of a man's heart, so secret men come to have knowledge of many things of that kind; while men *discharge* their minds rather than *impart* their minds. [Without explaining that he is doing so, Bacon seems here to use 'men' to refer to those who talk to secret men such as confessors, and to be saying that these 'penitents' (as we might call them) are aiming •to disburden themselves of their anxieties rather than •to inform their hearers about them.] In few words, mysteries are due to secrecy. Besides, nakedness is unattractive in mind as well as in body; and a man's manners and actions are *much* more respected if they are not entirely open. As for talkers and futile persons, they are commonly also vain and credulous; for he who talks what he knows, will also talk what he does not know; therefore set it down that a habit of secrecy is both politic and moral. And in these matters it is good that a man's face give his tongue leave to speak; for a man's revealing of himself by his facial expressions is a great weakness and betraying, given that it is often more noticed and believed than a man's words. (1) The first of these, **secretcy**, is the virtue of a confessor; and assuredly the secret man hears many confessions; ·others don't·, for who will open himself to a blab or a babbler? But if a man is thought to be secret,

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(2) The second, **dissimulation**, necessarily follows secrecy in many cases, so that anyone who wants to be secret must be a dissembler in some degree. For men are too crafty to allow a man. . . .to be secret, without swaying the balance on either side ·of the question that is at issue·. They will so beset a man with questions, and draw him on, and pick it out of him, that without an absurd silence he must show an inclination one way; or if he doesn't, they will gather as much by his silence as by his speech. As for equivocations, or oracular speeches, they cannot hold out long; so that no man can remain secret ·for long· unless he gives himself a little scope of dissimulation, which is (as it were) merely the skirts or train of secrecy.

(3) The third degree is **simulation** and speaking falsely.

I hold this to be more culpable, and less politic, except in great and rare matters. So if a man has a general habit of simulation, this is a vice arising either from a natural falseness or fearfulness in him or from his mind's having some main faults which he has to disguise. In the latter case he has to engage in simulation in other things as well, so as to keep in practice.

The advantages of simulation and dissimulation are three:

(i) To allay opposition, and to surprise; for where a man's intentions are published, that is an alarm to arouse all who are against them.

(ii) To reserve a fair retreat for a man; for if a man engages himself by a manifest and open declaration, he must go through or take a fall—i.e. he must stand by it or capitulate.

(iii) To make a better job of discovering the mind of someone else; for to someone who opens himself men will hardly show themselves adverse—i.e. are unlikely to oppose him openly—but will let him go on, and turn their freedom of speech to freedom of thought; and therefore it is a good shrewd proverb of the Spaniard, 'Tell a lie, and find a truth', as if there were no way of discovery but by simulation.

There are also three disadvantages to level the scales:

(i) The first is that simulation and dissimulation commonly carry with them a show of fearfulness, which in any business spoils a man's performance. [That addition replaces the obscure original: 'spoils the feathers of round flying up to the mark'. This suggests a metaphor involving archery, but it's not clear how it works.]

(ii) The second is that (dis)simulation puzzles and perplexes the thoughts of many who might otherwise cooperate with the man, leaving him to walk almost alone through life's journey,

(iii) The third and greatest disadvantage of (dissimula-

tion) is that it deprives a man of one of the most principal instruments for action, which is trust and belief.

The best make-up and temperament to have consists of openness in fame and opinion, secrecy in habit, dissimulation when this is appropriate, and a power to feign any one of these if there is no practical alternative.

7. Parents and children

The joys of parents are secret, and so are their griefs and fears; they cannot express the one, and they are not willing to express the other. Children sweeten labours, but they make misfortunes more bitter; they increase the cares of life, but they mitigate the remembrance of death. Perpetuity by generation is common to beasts; but memory, merit, and noble works are proper to men; and . . . the noblest works and foundations have come from childless men, who have sought to express the images of their minds where those of their bodies have failed; so the care of posterity is most in those who have no posterity. Those who are the first raisers of their houses are most indulgent towards their children, seeing them as the continuance not only of their kind, but of their work; and so both children and creatures. [That last clause seems to be an extremely clipped way of saying that the attitude of a human family-founder to his children is the same as God's attitude to his creatures.]

The difference in affection [see Glossary] of parents towards their various children is many times unequal, and sometimes unworthy, especially in the mother; as Solomon says, 'A wise son rejoices the father, but an ungracious son shames the mother.'³⁰ A man shall see, where there is a house full of children, one or two of the eldest respected and the youngest

³⁰ ['A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.' *Proverbs 10.1*].

petted or spoiled; but in the midst of a family of children there are some who are, as it were, forgotten, though in many cases they turn out to be the best. The illiberality of parents in allowance towards their children is a harmful error which •makes the children base, •acquaints them with tricks and stratagems, •leads them to keep company with low-down people, and •makes them surfeit more when they come to affluence. So the best way is for men to keep their authority towards their children, but not their purse. Men have a foolish manner (parents, schoolmasters and servants) in creating and breeding a rivalry between brothers during childhood, which often ends in discord when they are men, and disturbs families. . . .

Let parents choose early the vocations and courses they want their children to take, for then the children are most flexible; and let parents not give too much weight to the disposition of their children, thinking they will take best to that which they are most inclined to. Admittedly, if the liking or aptness of the children is extraordinary, then it is good not to cross it; but generally the precept is good *Optimum elige, suave et facile illud faciet consuetudo*.³¹ Younger brothers are commonly fortunate, but seldom or never where the elder are disinherited.

8. Marriage and single life

He who has wife and children has given hostages to fortune; for they are impediments to great enterprises, either of virtue or mischief [see Glossary]. Certainly the best works—the ones of greatest merit for the public—have come from men who

were unmarried or childless; men who in affection and means have married and endowed the public. But there is great reason for those who have children to have the greatest care for future times, unto which they know they must transmit their dearest pledges.³² There are some who, though they lead a single life, yet their thoughts end with themselves,³³ and regard future times as irrelevant to them; indeed there are others who regard wife and children as mere financial burdens; there are indeed even foolish, rich, covetous men who are proud of having no children, because they may be thought so much the richer. . . . But the most ordinary cause of a single life is liberty, especially in certain self-pleasing and capricious men who are so aware of every restraint that they will go near to thinking their girdles and garters to be bonds and shackles! Unmarried men are best friends, best masters, best servants; but not always best subjects of the state, for they can run away unburdened, and almost all fugitives are unmarried. A single life does well with churchmen, for charity will hardly water the ground where it must first fill a pool; that is, a married churchman can't afford much charity for his parishioners. It is indifferent [see Glossary] for judges and magistrates; for if they are facile [see Glossary] and corrupt, you will have a servant five times worse than a wife. For soldiers, I find that generals in their rousing speeches commonly put men in mind of their wives and children; and I think the despising of marriage amongst the Turks makes the common soldier more base. Certainly, wife and children are a kind of discipline of humanity; and single men, though they are many times more charitable because their means are less depleted, yet . . . they are more cruel and hard-hearted (good to make severe inquisitors!), because their tenderness

³¹ ['Select the course of life that is the most advantageous; habit will soon make it pleasant and easily endured.' [Attributed by Plutarch to Pythagoras.]]

³² [meaning something like 'hostages'.]

³³ [It is puzzling that Bacon writes 'though they lead a single life, yet' rather than 'because they lead a single life, therefore'.]

is not so often called upon. Grave natures—led by custom and therefore constant—are commonly loving husbands, as was said of Ulysses, *Vetulam suam praetulit immortalitati*³⁴

Chaste women are often proud and hard to please, presuming on the merit of their chastity. It is one of the best guarantees of chastity and obedience in a wife if she thinks her husband wise, which she will never do if she finds him to be jealous. Wives are young men's mistresses, companions for middle age, and old men's nurses; so as a man may have a pretext for marrying when he will, yet Thales, who answered the question when a man should marry 'A young man not yet, an elder man not at all', was reputed one of the wise men.

It is often seen that bad husbands have very good wives; whether it be that •it raises the price of their husbands' kindness when it comes, or that •the wives take pride in their patience. But if a woman chose her bad husband against her friends' advice, she is sure to be a good wife, making good her own folly.

9. Envy

The only affections [see Glossary] that have been noted to fascinate or bewitch are love and envy. They both have powerful wishes; they smoothly work their way into imaginations and suggestions, and they come easily into the eye. . . . We see, likewise, that the Scripture calls envy an 'evil eye'; and the astrologers call the evil influences of the stars 'evil aspects'; so that still there seems to be acknowledged in the act of envy an output from or input into the eye. Indeed, some have been so curious [see Glossary] as to note that the times

when the stroke or percussion of an envious eye hurts most does most hurt are when the envied person is beheld in glory or triumph, for that sets an edge upon envy; and besides at such times the spirits of the envied person come forth most into his outward parts, and so meet the blow. [That is the 'blow' inflicted as output from the envious person's eye.]

But, leaving these curiosities (though not unworthy to be thought about in a suitable place), I will discuss •what persons are apt to envy others. •what persons are most subject to be envied themselves, and •what is the difference between public and private envy.

A man who has no virtue in himself always envies virtue in others; for men's minds will feed either upon their own good or upon others' evil; and anyone who lacks the one will prey upon the other; and whoever is out of hope to attain to •another's virtue will seek to be even with him by depressing •his fortune [see Glossary].

In most cases a man who is busy and inquisitive is envious. He cannot aim to know much about *other men's* affairs, because all that ado—all that result of his busy inquisitiveness—may turn out to concern *his own* estate; so he must take a kind of play-pleasure in looking upon the fortunes [see Glossary] of others. Nor can someone who attends only to his own business find much matter for envy; for envy is a gadding passion, and walks the streets and does not keep home: *Non est curiosus, quin idem sit malevolus* [There is no person a busybody who isn't ill-natured too' (Plautus).]

Men of noble birth are visibly envious towards new men when they rise, for the •social• distance •between them• is altered; and it is like a deceit of the eye that when •the new men• come on, the nobility think that *they* are going back.

Deformed [see Glossary] persons and eunuchs, and old

³⁴ [He preferred his aged wife to immortality'. That is, he chose to return to his wife Penelope, refusing the offer of immortality from the goddess Calypso.

men and bastards, are envious; for he who cannot possibly improve his own situation will do what he can to devalue another's. Except in the case where these defects come to a very brave and heroic person who thinks to make his natural defects part of his honour; in that it should be said 'That a eunuch, or a lame man, did such great matters', affecting the honour of a miracle; as it was in Narses the eunuch, and Agesilaus and Tamerlane, who were lame men.

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

Those who desire to excel in too many matters—out of levity and vainglory—are always envious, for they cannot want work;³⁵ because they are certain to be surpassed by many people in some one of those things. This was the character of Adrian the emperor, who mortally envied poets and painters, and artificers in works on which he had a desire to excel.

Lastly, near kinsfolk and colleagues at work, and those who have been bred together, are more apt to envy their equals when the latter are raised; for it scolds them regarding their own fortunes, and points at them, and comes oftener into their minds, and likewise intrudes more into the observation of others. Envy always redoubles from speech and fame. Cain's envy was the more vile and malignant towards his brother Abel, because when his sacrifice was better accepted there was nobody to look on.

Thus much for those who are apt to envy.

Concerning those who are more or less subject to envy: First, persons of eminent virtue are less envied when they are advanced, for their fortune [see Glossary] seems due to

them. . . . Again, envy is always joined with comparing the envied person to oneself; and where there is no comparison, no envy; and therefore kings are envied only by kings. Nevertheless, it is to be noted that unworthy persons are most envied at their first coming in³⁶, and afterwards overcome envy better; whereas, contrariwise, persons of worth and merit are most envied when their fortune continues for a long time; for through that time, though their virtue be the same, it does not shine as brightly, for fresh men appear who darken it.

Persons of noble blood are less envied in their rising, for it seems only right done to their ·noble· birth. Besides, there seems not so much added to their fortune [see Glossary], and here is why. Envy is like sunbeams, which beat hotter on a bank or steep rising ground than on flat ground; and for the same reason, those who are advanced by degrees are less envied than those who are advanced suddenly and *per saltum* [= 'by a jump'].

Those who have joined with their honour great travels, cares, or perils, are less subject to envy; for men think they have had a hard time earning their honours, and sometimes pity them; and pity always heals envy. So you will see that the more deep and sober sort of politic [see Glossary] persons, in their greatness, are always bemoaning themselves what a life they lead, chanting *a quanta patimur* [= 'How vast the evils we endure!'] . Not that they feel it so; they only want to dull the edge of envy. But all this is to be understood as concerning business that is laid upon men, and not such as they call unto themselves; for nothing increases envy more than an unnecessary and ambitious enlarging of business; and nothing extinguishes envy more than for a great person to preserve all other inferior officers in the full rights and

³⁵ [Meaning that they'll always have work to do, to achieve the levels they aim at in all those pursuits. Here 'want' means 'lack'.]

³⁶ [i.e. at their first acquisition of social or political etc. status.]

pre-eminences of their places; for that puts so many screens between him and envy.

Above all, those who carry the greatness of their fortunes in an insolent and proud manner are most subject to envy, being never well but while they are showing how great they are—either by outward pomp or by triumphing over all opposition or competition. Whereas wise men will avoid being envied by allowing themselves, sometimes on purpose, to be crossed and overborne in things that do not much concern them. Yet this much is true: carrying one's greatness in a plain and open manner (as long as it is without arrogance and vainglory) draws less envy than if it were carried in a more crafty and cunning fashion; for in the latter case a man merely *seems* to be conscious of his own lack of worth, and offers himself as an object of envy.

Lastly, to conclude this part, as I said at the beginning that the act of envy had something of witchcraft in it, so there is no other cure of envy but the cure of witchcraft; and that is to remove the lot (as they call it) and to lay it on someone else; for which purpose, the wiser sort of great persons always bring on the stage somebody to whom to direct the envy that would otherwise come to themselves; sometimes on ministers [see Glossary] and servants, sometimes on colleagues and associates and the like; and there is never any shortage of persons of violent and adventurous natures who play that part, who will take power and business at any cost, just so long as they can get it somehow.

Now, to speak of public envy: there is yet some good in public envy, whereas in private there is none; for public envy is like a banishment that eclipses men when they grow too great; and is also a bridle to great men to keep them within bounds.

In a state envy is a disease like an infection; for just as infection spreads over sound tissue and taints it, so, when envy once comes into a state it changes the nature of even the state's best actions, and turns them into an ill odour; so there is little won by an intermingling of plausible [see Glossary] actions; for that is only evidence of weakness and fear of envy, which hurts so much the more—as is usually the case with infections, which you call down on you just by fearing them.

This public envy seems to bear chiefly upon principal officials or ministers, rather than upon kings and states themselves. But this is a sure rule, that if the envy of a minister is great, then the cause of it *in him* is small, and if general envy is somehow aimed at all the ministers of a state, then really the envy (though hidden) is aimed at the state itself. So much for public envy or discontentment, and the difference between it and private envy, which I handled in the first place.

I will add this general point concerning the affection of envy, that of all affections it is the most importune [see Glossary] and continual. It was well said *Invidia festos dies non agit*³⁷, for it is always working on someone or other. Other affections are aroused only now and then.

And it is also noted that love and envy make a man pine, which other affections do not because they are not so continual. It is also the vilest affection, and the most depraved; which is why it is the proper attribute of the devil, who is called 'The envious man who sows tares among the wheat by night'.³⁸ As it always happens that envy works subtly, and in the dark, and to the prejudice of good things such as the wheat.

³⁷ ['Envy keeps no holidays'.]

³⁸ ['But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way' [Matthew 13:25].]

10. Love

The stage is more appropriate for love than is the life of man. On the stage, love is always a matter for comedies, and now and then for tragedies; but in life it does much mischief [see Glossary], sometimes like a Siren, sometimes like a Fury. You may observe that among all the great and worthy persons of whom the memory remains—either ancient or recent—there is not one who has been transported to the mad degree of love; which shows that great spirits and great business keep out this weak passion. Exceptions must be made, however, of

- Marcus Antonius, the half-partner of the empire of Rome, and
- Appius Claudius, the decemvir and lawgiver;

of whom the former was indeed voluptuous and inordinate, but the latter was austere and wise; and therefore it seems that love can (though rarely) find entrance not only into an open heart but also into a heart well fortified, if watch is not well kept. It is a poor saying of Epicurus *Satis magnum alter alteri theatrum us*;³⁹ as if man, made for the contemplation of heaven and all noble objects, should do nothing but kneel before a little idol and make himself subject. . . . of the eye, which was given him for higher purposes! It is a strange thing to note the excess of this passion, and how it exaggerates the nature and value of things. What shows this is the fact that speaking in a perpetually exaggerated manner is acceptable in love, though nowhere else. Neither is it merely in the words, for—although it has been well said that ‘The arch-flatterer, with whom all the lesser flatterers are in communication, is a man’s self’—certainly the lover goes

further; for there never was a proud man who thought as absurdly well of himself as the lover does of the loved person; and therefore it was well said that ‘it is impossible to love and to be wise’.⁴⁰ This weakness appears most of all to the party loved, unless the love is reciprocal; for it is a true rule that love is always rewarded either with the return of love or with an inward and secret contempt; by how much the more men ought to beware of this passion, which loses not only other things but itself! As for the other losses, the poet’s account depicts them well: ‘He who preferred Helena, quitted the gifts of Juno and Pallas’; for anyone who over-values amorous affection quits both riches and wisdom. This passion has its floods in the very times of weakness, namely times of great prosperity and great adversity, though this latter has been less observed. Each of these times kindles love and make it more fervent, thereby showing it to be the child of folly. They do best who, if they cannot help admitting love, yet make it keep quarter,⁴¹ and sever it wholly from their serious affairs and actions of life; for if it once collides with business, it troubles men’s fortunes [see Glossary] and makes them unable to be true to their own ends.

I know not how, but military men are given to love; I think it is simply because they are given to wine, for perils commonly ask to be paid in pleasures.

There is in man’s nature a secret inclination and motion towards love of others, which, if it is not spent upon some one or a few, naturally spreads itself towards many, and makes men become humane and charitable, as it is seen sometimes in friars. Nuptial love makes mankind, friendly love perfects it, but wanton love corrupts and debases it.

³⁹ [‘It is sufficient for us to contemplate one another’; [compare Pope: ‘The proper study of mankind is man’].]

⁴⁰ [The writer Bacon is quoting here wrote *Amare et sapere vix deo conceditur* [‘Even a god finds it hard to love and be wise’].]

⁴¹ [A military expression, meaning roughly ‘stop it from fiercely using all its weapons’.]

11. Greatness of place

Men in great place [see Glossary] are thrice servants: servants of the sovereign or state, servants of fame, and servants of business; so that they have no freedom in their persons, in their actions, or in their times.⁴² It is a strange desire to seek power and to lose liberty; or to seek power over others and lose power over oneself. Rising into place is laborious, and by taking pains men come to greater pains; and it—the process of gaining a great place—is sometimes base, and in that case by indignities men come to dignities. The standing is slippery, and the only way down is either a downfall or at least an eclipse, which is a melancholy thing: *Cum non sis qui fueris, non esse cur velis vivere.*⁴³

Indeed, men cannot retire whenever they like; and they don't want to retire when there is reason for them to do so. They are impatient of privateness⁴⁴ even in old age and sickness, which require the shadow;⁴⁵ like old townsmen who continue sitting at their street door, although they thereby offer age to scorn. Certainly, great persons need to borrow other men's opinions to think themselves happy; for if they judge by their own feeling they cannot find it [i.e. cannot find happiness]; but if they think within themselves what other men think of them, and that other men would like to be as they are, then they are happy by report (as it were), when perhaps they find the contrary within; for they are the first to find their own griefs, though they are the last to find their own faults. Certainly, men in great fortunes are

strangers to themselves, and while they are in the puzzle of business they have no time to tend their health either of body or mind. *Illi mors gravis incubat, Qui notus nimis omnibus, Ignotus moritur.*⁴⁶

In place there is license to do good and evil, the latter of which is a curse; for in evil the best condition is not to will, the second to be unable to. But power to do good is the true and lawful end of aspiring; for good thoughts, even if God accepts them, are little better for men than good dreams unless they are put into action; and that cannot happen without power and place, as the vantage and commanding ground. Merit and good works are the end of man's motion, and awareness of the same is the accomplishment of man's rest; for if a man can be partaker of God's theatre, he shall likewise be partaker of God's rest. *Et conversus Deus, ut aspiceret opera, quae fecerunt manus sua, vidit quod omnia essent bona nimis*⁴⁷, and then the Sabbath the day of rest.

In the discharge of your place [i.e. in the performance of your duties], set before you the best examples; for imitation is a globe of precepts; and after a time set *yourself* before you as an example; and examine yourself strictly whether you did not do best at first. And do not neglect the examples of those who have performed badly in the same place; not to make yourself look good by attacking their memory but to direct yourself what to avoid. Reform, therefore, without swaggering or bringing scandal on former times and persons; but set it down to yourself to *create* good precedents as well as to *follow* them.

⁴² [These three items are not meant to pair off with the preceding three.]

⁴³ ['Since you are not what you were, there is no reason why you should wish to live.' [Cicero]]

⁴⁴ [The opposite of having a distinguished 'place'.]

⁴⁵ ['a weak or attenuated remnant of a thing or person' (OED)]

⁴⁶ ['Death presses heavily upon him who, well known to all others, dies unknown to himself.' (Seneca)]

⁴⁷ ['And God turned to behold the works which his hands had made, and he saw that everything was very good.' [Genesis 1:31]]

Track things back to their first institution, and observe wherein and how they have degenerated; but yet ask counsel of both times—of the ancient time what is best, and of the latter time what is fittest. Try to make your course regular, so that men may know beforehand what they can expect from you; but don't be too positive and peremptory; and express yourself well when you digress from your rule. Preserve the rights of your place [see Glossary], but don't noisily raise questions of jurisdiction; and assume your rights in silence and *de facto* [= 'as a matter of course'], rather than voice it with claims and challenges. Preserve likewise the rights of inferior places; and think it more honour to direct them from above than to be busy in all of them. Embrace and invite helps and advice concerning the carrying out of the duties of your place; and when folk bring you information, do not drive them away as meddlers, but hear in good part what they have to say.

The vices of authority are chiefly four:

- (1) delays,
- (2) corruption,
- (3) roughness, and
- (4) facility [see Glossary].

(1) For delays, give easy access, keep times appointed, go through with whatever is in hand, and don't alternate between businesses except when it is necessary. (2) For corruption, do not only **a** bind your own or your servant's hands from taking, but **b** bind the hands of suitors from offering; for integrity used does **a** the one, but integrity professed and with a manifest detestation of bribery does **b** the other; and avoid not only the fault, but the suspicion of it. Whoever is found variable, and obviously changes without obvious cause, gives suspicion of corruption; therefore, whenever you change your opinion or course of action, profess it plainly, and declare it together with the reasons that move you to change, and

do not think to steal it [i.e. to bring your change of opinion into play without anyone noticing it.] A servant or a favourite, if he is close-mouthed and has no other apparent cause of esteem, is commonly thought to be a path to hidden corruption. (3) Roughness is a needless cause of discontent: severity breeds fear, but roughness breeds hate. Even reproofs from authority ought to be grave, and not taunting. (4) As for facility, it is worse than bribery, for bribes come only now and then; but if importunity [see Glossary] or favouritism lead a man, he will never be without them; as Solomon says, 'To have persons as favourites is not good; for such a man will transgress for a piece of bread' [Proverbs 28:21.]

It is most true what was anciently spoken: 'A place shows the man; and it shows some for the better, and some for the worse.' *Omnium consensu capax imperii, nisi imperasset* [By the consent of all he was fit to govern, if he had not governed] says Tacitus of Galba; but of Vespasian he says *Solus imperantium, Vespasianus mutatus in melius* ['Of all the emperors, Vespasian alone changed for the better after his accession.'] Though he was speaking of *sufficiency* in the case of Galba and of *manners and affection* in the case of Vespasian. It is an assured sign of a worthy and generous spirit whom honour amends [i.e. who improves when he gains honours]; for honour is or should be the place of virtue; and just as in nature things move violently *to* their place and calmly *in* their place, so virtue in *ambition* is violent, in *authority* settled and calm. All rising to great place is by a winding stair; and if there are factions, it is good for a man to favour himself while he is rising, and to balance himself when he is placed.

Use the memory of your predecessor fairly and tenderly; for if you do not, that is a debt that will surely be paid when you are gone. If you have colleagues, respect them; and call them when they are not looking for it rather than excluding them when they have reason to expect to be called. . . .

12. Boldness

It is a trivial grammar-school text, but worthy of a wise man's consideration. Demosthenes was asked: 'What is the chief part of an orator?' He answered, 'Action.' 'What next?' 'Action.' 'What next again?' 'Action.' He said it that knew it best, and had by nature no advantage in what he commended. A strange thing that the part of an orator which is merely superficial, and rather the virtue of a player, should be placed so high above those other noble parts of invention, elocution, and the rest; indeed, almost alone, as if it were all in all. But the reason is plain. There is in human nature generally more of the fool than of the wise; and therefore, the faculties by which the foolish part of men's minds is taken are the most potent.

The case of boldness in civil business is wonderfully like this. What first? 'Boldness.' What second and third? 'Boldness.' And yet boldness is a child of ignorance and baseness, far inferior to other parts; but nevertheless it does fascinate, and bind hand and foot those who are either shallow in judgment or weak in courage, and those are the greatest part of the human race. Boldness even prevails with wise men at weak times; so we see it doing wonders in popular states, but less with senates and princes. It achieves less when the bold person first comes into action than it does soon after; for boldness is a poor keeper of promise, [i.e. doesn't come up to our expectations of it].

Just as there are mountebanks— itinerant quacks—for the natural body, so are there mountebanks for the politic body; men that undertake great cures, and perhaps have been lucky in two or three experiments, but have no grounding in science, and therefore cannot hold out; nay, you will often see a bold fellow do Mahomet's miracle. Mahomet made

the people believe that he would call a hill to him, and from the top of it offer up his prayers for the observers of his law. The people assembled; Mahomet again and again called the hill to come to him; and when the hill stood still, he was not in the least abashed, but said 'If the hill will not come to Mahomet, Mahomet will go to the hill.' So these bold-men, when they have promised great matters and failed most shamefully, if they have the perfection of boldness they will slight it over, and change course with no more ado.

Certainly, to men of great judgment bold persons are a sport to behold; indeed, even to the vulgar [see Glossary] boldness has something of the ridiculous; for if absurdity is the subject of laughter, you may be sure that great boldness is seldom without some absurdity; it is especially a sport to see when a bold fellow is out of countenance, for that puts his face into a most shrunken and wooden posture, as it must; for in bashfulness the spirits do a little go and come, but bold men on similar occasions come to a halt, like a stalemate in chess, where it is no checkmate but the game cannot stir;⁴⁸ but this state of affairs would be fitter for a satire than for a serious observation.

Boldness is always blind, for it does not see dangers and inconveniences; therefore it is bad in advising, good in execution; so that the right use of bold persons is that they never have supreme command but are seconds and under the direction of others; for in advising it is good to see dangers; and in execution not to see them unless they are very great.

⁴⁸ [because the player whose turn it is to move cannot move without putting himself into check.]

13. Goodness, and goodness of nature

I take 'goodness' in the sense of 'affecting ·favourably· the welfare of men', which is what the Greeks call *philanthropia*; and the word 'humanity', as it is used ·these days·, is a little too light to express it. I call the **habit** 'Goodness', and I call the **inclination** 'goodness of nature'. This is the greatest of all virtues and dignities of the mind, being the character of the Deity; and without it man is a busy, mischievous, wretched thing, no better than a kind of vermin. Goodness answers to the theological virtue *charity*, and admits no excess but error [apparently meaning that although charity can't be excessive, it can be misdirected.] The desire for power in excess caused the angels to fall; the desire for knowledge in excess caused man to fall; but in charity ·itself· there is no excess, and neither angel nor man comes into danger by it. The inclination to goodness is imprinted deeply in the nature of man, so far that where it is not directed towards men it will go to other living creatures; as it is seen in the Turks, a cruel people who nevertheless are kind to beasts, and give alms to dogs and birds. . . . Errors may indeed be committed in this virtue of goodness or charity. The Italians have an ungracious proverb: *Tanto buon che val niente* ('So good that he is good for nothing'); and one of the doctors of Italy, Nicholo Machiavelli, had the confidence to put in writing, almost in plain terms, that 'The Christian faith has given up good men as prey to those who are tyrannical and unjust'; which he said because indeed no law, sect, or opinion ever magnified goodness as much as the Christian religion does; therefore, to avoid both the scandal and the danger, it is

good to be open about the errors of such an excellent habit. Seek the good of other men, but do not be in bondage to their faces or their fancies; for that is merely facility [see Glossary] or softness, which takes an honest mind prisoner. And do not give a gem to Aesop's cock, who would be better pleased and happier if he had been given a barley-corn. The example of God teaches the lesson truly: 'He sends his rain, and makes his sun to shine upon the just and the unjust'.⁴⁹ But he does not rain wealth or shine honour and virtues upon men equally; common benefits are to be communicated with all, but peculiar [see Glossary] benefits with choice. And beware how, in making the portraiture, you break the pattern; for divinity makes the love of ourselves the pattern, the love of our neighbours merely the portraiture: 'Sell all thou hast, and give it to the poor, and follow me.'⁵⁰ But do not sell all that you have unless you come and follow me; that is, unless you have a vocation in which you can do as much good with little means as ·you can do· with great; for otherwise in feeding the streams you dry the fountain.

Not only is there only a **habit** of goodness directed by right reason, but there is in some men, even in nature, a **disposition** towards it;⁵¹ as on the other side there is a natural malignity, for there are people who in their nature are not drawn to the good of others.

The lighter sort of malignity turns only to a quarrelsome aptness to oppose; but the deeper sort turns to envy and mere mischief [see Glossary]. Such men in other men's calamities are. . . .like flies that are still buzzing upon any thing that is raw; misanthropes who make it their practice to bring men to the bough ·to be hanged· and yet never have a tree

⁴⁹ ['For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust' [*Matthew* 5:45.]

⁵⁰ ['Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.' [*Mark* 10:21]]

⁵¹ [This contrast between habit and disposition is presumably meant to echo the earlier contrast between habit and inclination.]

for the purpose in their gardens. . . . Such dispositions are the very errors of human nature, and yet they are the fittest timber to make great politics of; like knee timber,⁵² which is good for ·making· ships that are ordained to be tossed, but not for building houses that shall stand firm.

The parts and signs of goodness are many. If a man is gracious and courteous to strangers, that shows he is a citizen of the world, and that his heart is not an island cut off from other lands but a continent that joins to them; if he is compassionate towards the afflictions of others, it shows that his heart is like the noble tree that is itself wounded when it gives the ·medicinal· balm; if he easily pardons and remits offences, it shows that his mind is planted above injuries, so that he is out of range of them; if he is thankful for small benefits, it shows that he weighs men's minds and not their trash; but above all, if he has St. Paul's perfection, that he would wish to be an anathema from Christ for the salvation of his brethren,⁵³ it shows much of a divine nature, and a kind of conformity with Christ himself.

14. Nobility

I will speak of nobility first as a portion of an estate, and then as a condition of particular persons. A monarchy where there is no nobility at all is always a tyranny as pure and absolute as that of the Turks; for nobility moderates sovereignty, and draws the people's eyes somewhat aside from the royal line; but democracies do not need it; and they are commonly more quiet and less subject to sedition than ·states· where there are lineages of nobles; for ·in democracies· men's eyes

are upon the business, and not upon the persons; or if upon the persons, it is a question of •who is fittest for the business and not of •flags and pedigree. We see the Swiss last well, despite their diversity of religion and of cantons; for utility is their bond, and not attitudes to particular persons. The United Provinces of the Low Countries⁵⁴ excel in their government; for where there is an equality the consultations are more indifferent [see Glossary], and the payments and tributes more cheerful. A great and potent nobility adds majesty to a monarch, but diminishes ·his· power; it puts life and spirit into the people, but presses their fortune [i.e. confiscates their money; cf. press-gangs that forced men into the navy]. It is well when nobles are not too great for sovereignty or for justice and yet maintained at a sufficient height for the insolence of inferiors to be broken upon them before it comes on too fast upon the majesty of kings. A numerous nobility causes poverty and inconvenience in a state, for it adds to the state's expenses. Also, because inevitably many of the nobility eventually fall to being weak in fortune, it makes a kind of disproportion between honour and means.

As for nobility in particular persons, it is a reverend thing to see an ancient castle or building not in decay, or to see a fair timber-tree sound and perfect; how much more to behold an ancient noble family, which has stood against the waves and weathers of time! New nobility is only the act of power, but ancient nobility is the act of time. Those who are first •raised to nobility are commonly more virtuous but less innocent than their descendants; for any •rising is likely to occur through a mixture of good and evil arts; but it is only to be expected that the memory of their virtues remains to their posterity, and their faults

⁵² [i.e. timber that has grown crooked, and has been cut so as to form an angle.]

⁵³ *Second Timothy* 2:10: 'I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.'

⁵⁴ [[now known as the Netherlands.]]

die with themselves. Nobility of birth commonly lowers industry, and he who is not industrious envies him who is; besides, noble persons cannot go much higher; and he who stops at a certain level when others rise can hardly avoid motions of envy. On the other side, nobility extinguishes the passive envy from others towards them, because they are in possession of honour. Certainly, kings who have able men of their nobility will find it easy to employ them, and find them better at transacting the kings' business; for people naturally bend to nobles as in some way born to command.

15. Seditious and Troubles

Shepherds of people need to know the calendars of tempests in the state, which are commonly greatest when things grow to equality; as natural tempests are greatest about the equinoxes, and as there are certain hollow blasts of wind and secret swellings of seas before a tempest, so are there in states: *Ille etiam cæcos instare tumultus Sæpe monet, fraudesque et operta tumescere bella.* [‘He often warns, too, that secret revolt is impending, that treachery and open warfare are ready to burst forth’ (Virgil).]

Among the signs of troubles are •libels and licentious discourses against the state, when they are frequent and open; and. . .•false news, often running up and down, to the disadvantage of the state, and hastily embraced. Virgil, giving the pedigree of Fame [see Glossary] says she was sister to the giants: ‘Mother Earth, exasperated at the wrath of the Deities, produced her as a sister to the giants Caius and Enceladus.’

As well as being relics of seditious past, Fames are no less the preludes of seditious to come.

Seditious *tumults*—involving riots in the streets—and

seditious *Fames* differ only as brother and sister, masculine and feminine; especially when the Fame takes in an ill sense and traduces the best and most plausible [see Glossary] actions of a state, which ought to give greatest contentment. For that shows the envy to be great, as Tacitus says: *Conflata magna invidia, seu bene seu male gesta premunt* [‘When dislike prevails against the government, good actions and bad offend alike.’]

Neither does it follow that because these Fames are a sign of troubles, the best remedy is to suppress them very severely; for in many cases •merely• *despising* them checks them best, whereas being busy trying to *stop* them merely makes a wonder long-lived. Also, the kind of obedience that Tacitus speaks of should be regarded as suspect: *Erant in officio, sed tamen qui mallent imperantium mandata interpretari, quam exsequi* [‘They attended to their duties; but still, as preferring to *discuss* the commands of their rulers rather than to *obey* them.’] Disputing, excusing, nit-picking over mandates and directions is a kind of shaking off of the yoke, an attempt at disobedience; especially if in these disputes those who are for the direction •given by the rulers• speak fearfully and gently, and those who are against it speak audaciously.

Also, as Machiavelli notes well, when princes [see Glossary] who ought to be common parents—i.e. parents of all their subjects—•behave like a party, and lean to one side; it is like a boat that is overthrown by uneven weight on one side, as was well seen in the time of Henry III of France; for first he entered the league for the extirpation of the Protestants, and presently •went against it• after that league was turned upon himself; for when the authority of princes is made a mere accessory to a cause, and there are other bands that tie faster than the band of sovereignty, kings begin to be put almost out of possession.

[This paragraph likens **(i)** the relation of the sun’s movement to that of the planets (according to an old theory) to **(ii)** the relation of a

government's doings to the doings of its most powerful subjects.] Also, when discords, quarrels and factions are conducted openly and audaciously, it is a sign that respect for government is lost; for **(ii)** the motions of the greatest persons in a government ought to be like **(i)** the motions of the planets under the 'primary motive power'—the sun—according to the old opinion, which is that each is carried *swiftly* by the highest motion and *slowly* in its own motion; and therefore, when great ones in their own particular motion move violently, and—as Tacitus expresses it well—*liberius quam ut imperantium meminissent* ['Too freely to remember their own rulers'], it is a sign that the orbs are not properly ordered; for reverence for God is what princes are held steady by—God who threatens the dissolving of the princes: *Solvam cingula regum*.

So when any of the four pillars of government are mainly shaken or weakened (which are religion, justice, counsel, and treasure), men need to pray for fair weather. But I shall now pass from this topic . . . and speak first of **(a)** the materials of seditions, then of **(b)** the motives of them, and thirdly of **(c)** the remedies for them.

(a) It is well to consider the materials of seditions, because the surest way to prevent seditions (if the times allow it) is to take away the matter of them; for if there is fuel prepared, it is hard to tell where the spark will come from that sets it on fire. The matter of seditions is of two kinds: •much poverty and •much discontentment. It is certain, so many overthrown estates, so many votes for troubles. Lucan notes well the state of Rome before the civil war: *Hinc usura vorax, rapidumque in tempore fœnus, Hinc concussa fides, et multis utile bellum*. ['Hence estates eaten up by usurious rates of interest, and interest greedy of time, hence credit shaken, and war **useful to many** .'] This same *multis utile bellum* is an assured and infallible sign of a state disposed to

seditious and troubles; and if this poverty and broken estate among the better sort of people is joined with want and necessity among the poor people, the danger is imminent and great; for the rebellions of the belly are the worst. As for discontentments, they are in the politic body like humours [see Glossary] in the natural body, which are apt to gather a more than natural heat and to inflame; and let no prince [see Glossary] measure the danger of them by this,

•whether they are just or unjust; for that would be to imagine people to be too reasonable, which we know they are not, because they often spurn at their own good; nor yet by this,

• whether the grievances they arise from are in fact great or small; for the most dangerous discontentments are those where the fear is greater than the feeling: *Dolendi modus, timendi non item* ['To grief there is a limit, not so to fear.'] Besides, in great oppressions, the same things that provoke the patience also check the courage; but in fears it is not so.

And no prince or state should be secure concerning discontentments because they have been frequent or long-lasting yet no peril has ensued; for although it is true that not every vapour or fume turns into a storm, it is nevertheless true that storms, though they blow over many times, yet may fall at last [i.e. may descend from the upper regions to the ground, where they can do damage]; and, as the Spanish proverb notes well, 'The cord breaks at the last by the weakest pull'.

(b) The causes and motives of seditions are

- innovation in religion,
- taxes,
- alteration of laws and customs,
- breaking of privileges,
- general oppression, advancement of unworthy persons, strangers, dearths,
- disbanded soldiers,

•factions grown desperate
and whatever in offending people joins and knits them in a
common cause.

As for the remedies, there may be some *general* preser-
vatives, of which I shall speak. As for the precisely correct
cure, it must answer to the *particular* disease, and so be left
to counsel rather than rule.

The first remedy or prevention is to remove by all possible
means the material cause of sedition I have been speaking
of, namely

- want and poverty in the state; the removal of which is
served by
- the opening and well-balancing of trade,
- the cherishing of manufactures,
- the banishing of idleness,
- the repressing of waste and excess by sumptuary
laws,
- the improvement and husbanding of the soil,
- the regulating of prices of things that can be sold,
- the moderating of taxes and tributes,

and the like. Generally, it is to be expected that the pop-
ulation of a kingdom (especially if it is not mown down by
wars) will not exceed the stock of the kingdom which should
maintain them; and the population is not to be reckoned
only by number, for a smaller number that spend more and
earn less wear out a state sooner than a greater number that
live lower and gather more. So the multiplying of nobility
and other degrees of quality in an over-proportion to the
common people speedily brings a state to necessity; and so
does likewise an overgrown clergy, for they bring nothing to
the stock. . . .

It is likewise to be remembered that because the increase

of any state must be at the expense of the foreigner (for
whatever is somewhere acquired is somewhere lost), there
are just three things that one nation sells to another: •the
commodity, as nature yields it, •the manufacture, and •the
transport; so that if these three wheels go, wealth will flow
as in a spring tide. And it often happens that *materiam
superabit opus* [‘The workmanship will surpass the material’ (Ovid)],
that the work and transport is worth more than the material,
and enriches a state more, as is notably seen in the Low
Countrymen, who have the best mines in the world.

Above all things, good policy should be so used that the
treasure and moneys in a state are not gathered into a few
hands; for otherwise a state may have a great stock and yet
starve. And money is like muck [= manure], not good unless
it is spread. This is done chiefly by suppressing, or at least
keeping a stern hand on, the devouring trades of usury,
engrossing,⁵⁵ great pasturages,⁵⁶ and the like.

(c) For removing discontentments, or at least the danger
of them, there are in every state (as we know) two portions of
subjects, the nobles and the commonalty. When one of these
is discontented, the danger is not great; because common
people are slow to move if they are not stirred up by the
greater sort; and the greater sort have little strength unless
the multitude are apt and ready to move of themselves; then
there is a danger when the greater sort simply wait for the
troubling of the waters amongst the lower sort so that then
they may declare themselves. The poets say that the other
gods would have bound Jupiter, and when he heard of this
through the counsel of Pallas, he sent for ·the giant· Briareus
with his hundred hands to come in to his aid; an emblem,
no doubt, to show how safe it is for monarchs to make sure
of the good-will of common people.

⁵⁵ [buying wholesale then selling retail.]

⁵⁶ [Farming large quantities of livestock; Bacon is implying that this uses land that would be more profitably used raising crops.]

To give moderate liberty for griefs and discontentments to be expressed and thus to evaporate—as long as it does not involve too much insolence or swaggering—is a safe way; for he who does not go this way, but turns the humours [see Glossary] back and makes the wound bleed inwards risks creating malign ulcers and pernicious abscesses.

[This paragraph refers to the myth of Pandora's box—told by Hesiod—in which a box full of evils is opened, allowing its contents to spread, until it is closed just in time to prevent the escape of Hope.] The part of Epimetheus [afterthought] might well become Prometheus [forethought], in the case of discontentments, for there is not a better provision against them. Epimetheus, when griefs and evils flew abroad, at last shut the lid and kept Hope in the bottom of the vessel. Certainly, the politic and artificial nourishing and entertaining of hopes, and carrying men from hopes to hopes, is one of the best antidotes against the poison of discontentments; and it is a certain sign of a wise government and proceeding if it can hold men's hearts by hopes when it cannot hold them by satisfaction; and if it can handle things in such a way that no evil shall appear so forceful that it has no outlet of hope; which is easier to do because particular persons and factions are apt enough to flatter themselves that they can succeed or at least to pretend to believe that which they do not believe.

Also the . . . prevention of there being any likely or fit head to whom discontented persons may resort and under whom they may join is a known but excellent point of caution. I understand a fit head to be one who has greatness and reputation, who has the confidence of the discontented party who look to him, and who is thought to be on his own part; which kind of persons are either to be won and reconciled

to the state, and that in a fast and true manner; or to be confronted with some other member of the same party who may oppose them, and so divide the reputation. Generally, dividing and breaking of all factions and combinations that are adverse to the state, and setting them at . . . distrust amongst themselves, is not one of the worst remedies; for it is a desperate case if those who hold with the proceeding of the state are full of discord and faction and those who are against it are whole and united.

I have noticed, that some witty and sharp speeches that have fallen from the lips of princes have given fire to seditious. Cæsar did himself infinite hurt in that speech *Sylla nescivit literas, non potuit dictare*,⁵⁷ for it utterly cut off the hope that men had entertained that he would at some time give over his dictatorship. Galba undid himself by saying *Legi a se militem, non emi* ['Soldiers were levied by him, not bought.'], for it put the soldiers out of hope of the donative [see Glossary]. So did Probus, when he said *Si vixero, non opus erit amplius Romano imperio militibus* ['If I live, there will no longer be need of soldiers in the Roman empire'], a speech of great despair for the soldiers, and many like them. In tender matters and ticklish times princes surely need to be careful what they say, especially in these short speeches which fly abroad like darts, and are thought to be shot out of their secret intentions; whereas large discourses are flat things, and not so much noted.

Lastly, let princes, against all events, have near to them some great person or persons of military valour, for the repressing of seditious in their beginnings; for without that, there would be more trepidation in court upon the first breaking out of troubles than were fit, and the state would run the danger of fitting what Tacitus says: *Atque is habitus*

⁵⁷ ['Sylla is illiterate, so he could not dictate'; a joke based on a punning use of *dictare*, meaning 'dictate (a letter to a scribe)' and 'rule as a dictator'-Cæsar's role at the time.]

animorum fuit, ut pessimum facinus auderent pauci, plures vellent, omnes paterentur [‘And such was the state of feeling that a few dared to perpetrate the worst of crimes, more wished to do so, all submitted to them’]. But let such military persons be assured, and of good reputation, rather than tainted by faction and popular; also having good relations with the other great men in the state. Or else the remedy is worse than the disease.

16. Atheism

I had rather believe all the fables in the legends, and the Talmud, and the Alcoran, than that this universal frame is without a mind; so God never wrought a miracle to refute atheism because his ordinary works refute it. It is true that a little philosophy [see Glossary] inclines man’s mind to atheism, but depth in philosophy brings men’s minds around to religion; for while the mind of man looks on second causes⁵⁸ scattered, it may sometimes stay content with them and go no further; but when it beholds the chain of them interacting and linked together, it has to fly to Providence and Deity. Indeed, even the school that is most accused of atheism does most demonstrate religion: that is the school of Leucippus, Democritus and Epicurus; for it is a thousand times more credible that •four mutable elements, and one immutable fifth essence [or spirit] duly and eternally placed, need no God, than that •an army of infinite small portions, or seeds unplaced, should have produced this order and beauty without a divine marshal. [These ‘seeds’ are the atoms that were postulated by the school Bacon is here attacking.]

The Scripture says ‘The fool has said in his heart, there is no God’ [Psalms 14:1 and 53:1]. It is not said ‘The fool has *thought* in his heart’; so that it is what he says by rote to

himself as something he would like to be true, have, rather than that he can thoroughly believe it or be persuaded of it; for none deny there is a God but those to whose (seeming) advantage it is that there were no God.

Nothing shows more that atheism is on the lips rather than in the heart of man than this, that atheists are always talking of this opinion of theirs as though it were faint within themselves and they would be glad to be strengthened by the consent of others; indeed, you will have atheists strive to get disciples, as it fares with other sects; and—most of all—you will see some of them that will suffer for atheism, and not recant; whereas, if they did truly think that there was no such thing as God, why should they trouble themselves? Epicurus is charged with dissembling for his credit’s sake when he affirmed that there were blessed natures, but such as enjoyed themselves without having respect to the government of the world. His accusers say that he was temporizing and that in secret he thought there was no God; but by this he is slandered, for his words are noble and divine: *Non Deos vulgi negare profanum; sed vulgi opiniones Diis applicare profanum*. [It is not profane to deny the existence of the deities of the vulgar; but it is profane to apply to the real divinities the received notions of the vulgar.] Plato could have said no more; and, although he [Epicurus] had the confidence to deny the administration, he had not the power to deny the nature. The Indians of the west have names for their particular gods, though they have no name for God (as if the heathens should have had the names ‘Jupiter’, ‘Apollo’, ‘Mars’ etc. but not the word ‘Deus’), which shows that even those barbarous people have the notion, though they have not the latitude and extent of it; so that against atheists the very savages take part with the very subtlest philosophers. The contemplative

⁵⁸ [ordinary causes, distinguished from God, the ‘first cause’]

atheist is rare: a Diagoras, a Bion, a Lucian perhaps, and some others; but they seem to be more ·numerous· than they are, because all those who impugn a received religion or superstition are branded with the name of ‘atheists’ by their opponents. But the great atheists indeed are hypocrites, who are ever handling holy things, but without feeling, so that they must needs be cauterized in the end.

The causes of atheism are:

(i) Divisions in religion, if there are many of them; for any one main division adds zeal to both sides, but many divisions introduce atheism.

(ii) Scandal of priests, when it comes to the kind of situation that St. Bernard describes: *Non est jam dicere, ut populus, sic sacerdos; quia nec sic populus, ut sacerdos.* [‘It is not for us now to say “As the people are, so are the priests”; for the priests are even worse than the people’.]

(iii) The custom of profane scoffing in holy matters, which gradually defaces the reverence of religion: and lastly

(iv) learned times, specially with peace and prosperity; for troubles and adversities do more to bow men’s minds to religion.

Those who deny a God destroy man’s nobility, for certainly man is kin to the beasts by his body; and if he is not kin to God by his spirit, he is a base and ignoble creature. Atheism likewise destroys magnanimity and the raising of human nature. To see why, take the example of a dog, and notice what generosity and courage he will put on when he finds himself maintained by a man, who is to him in place of a god or *melior natura* [= a superior nature]. His courage is manifestly something which that creature could never attain without that confidence in a better nature than his own. So man, when he rests and feels secure under divine protection and favour, gathers a force and faith that human nature in itself could not obtain; therefore, as atheism is in all respects

hateful, so it is in this, that it deprives human nature of the means to exalt itself above human frailty.

As it is in particular persons, so it is in nations: never was there such a state for magnanimity as Rome. Of this state hear what Cicero says:

Quam volumus, licet, Patres conscripti, nos amemus, tamen nec numero Hispanos, nec robore Gallos, nec calliditate Pœnos, nec artibus Græcos, nec denique hoc ipso hujus gentis et terræ domestico nativoque sensu Italos ipsos et Latinos; sed pietate, ac religione, atque hac una sapientia, quod Deorum immortalium numine omnia regi, gubernarique perspeximus, omnes gentes, nationesque superavimus.

[‘We may admire ourselves, conscript fathers, as much as we please; still, neither by numbers did we vanquish the Spaniards, nor by bodily strength the Gauls, nor by cunning the Carthaginians, nor through the arts the Greeks, nor finally by the inborn and native good sense of this our nation, and this our race and soil, the Italians and Latins themselves; but we have subdued all races and nations through our devotion and our religious feeling, and through our having perceived that all things are regulated and governed by the providence of the immortal Gods.’]

17. Superstition

It would be better to have no opinion of God at all than an opinion that is unworthy of him; for the one is unbelief, the other is insult, and certainly superstition is the reproach of the Deity. Plutarch says well to that purpose: ‘Surely,’ he says, ‘I had rather a great many men should say there was no such man at all as Plutarch than that they should say that there was one Plutarch who would eat his children as soon as they were born’, as the poets speak of Saturn; and as

the insult to God is greater, so the danger is greater for men. Atheism leaves a man with sense, with philosophy, with natural piety, with laws, with reputation, all of which may be guides to an outward moral virtue even if religion were not; but superstition dismounts all these and erects an absolute monarchy in the minds of men. Therefore atheism did never perturb states; for it makes men wary of themselves, as looking no further, and we see the times inclined to atheism (as the time of Augustus Cæsar) were civil times; but superstition has been the confusion of many states, and brings in a new *primum mobile* [first mover] that ravishes all the spheres of government. The master of superstition is the people, and in all superstition wise men follow fools; and arguments are fitted to practice in a reversed order. It was gravely said by some of the prelates in the Council of Trent, where the doctrine of the schoolmen had great sway, that the schoolmen were like astronomers, who feigned eccentrics [irregular movements] and epicycles and such engines of orbs to save the phenomena,⁵⁹ although they knew there were no such things; and in like manner it was said that the schoolmen had framed a number of subtle and intricate axioms and theorems to save the practice of the Church. The causes of superstition are

- pleasing and sensual rites and ceremonies,
- excess of outward and pharisaical holiness,
- over-great reverence of traditions, which are sure to load the Church,
- the stratagems of prelates for their own ambition and personal wealth,
- the favouring too much of good intentions, which opens the gate to conceits and novelties,
- the taking an aim at divine matters by human ones,

which is sure to breed a mixture of imaginations, and lastly

- barbarous times, especially joined with calamities and disasters.

Superstition without a veil is a deformed [see Glossary] thing; for just as it adds deformity to an ape to be so like a man, so the similarity of superstition to religion makes it the more deformed; and as wholesome meat corrupts into little worms, so good forms and orders corrupt into a number of petty observances.

There is a superstition in avoiding superstition, when men think to do best if they go furthest from the formerly received superstition; so care should be taken that (as it happens in purgings that go wrong) the good be not taken away with the bad, which commonly is done when the populace is the reformer.

18. Travel

Travel by the younger sort is a part of education; by the elder, a part of experience. He who travels into a country before he has some entrance into the language, goes to school and not to travel. That young men travel under some tutor or grave servant is good, so long as he has the language, and has been in the country before; so that he may be able to tell them what things are worth seeing in the country they go to, what acquaintances they are to seek, what exercises or discipline the place yields; for otherwise young men will go hooded, and look abroad little.

It is a strange thing that in sea voyages, where there is nothing to be seen but sky and sea, men should make diaries; but in land travel, wherein so much is to be observed,

⁵⁹ [to find some theory that fits the observed facts without really explaining them.]

for the most part they omit it, as if chance were fitter to be registered than observation. Let diaries, therefore, be brought in use. The things to be seen and observed are, the courts of princes, especially when they give audience to ambassadors; the courts of justice while they sit and hear causes; and so of ecclesiastical synods; the churches and monasteries, with the monuments they contain; the walls and fortifications of cities and towns; and so the bays and harbours, antiquities and ruins, libraries, colleges, disputations, and lectures, where there are any; shipping and navies; houses and gardens of state and pleasure near great cities; armouries, arsenals, magazines, money-exchanges, warehouses, exercises of horsemanship, fencing, training of soldiers, and the like; comedies of the kind the better sort of persons go to; treasuries of jewels and robes; cabinets and rarities; and, to conclude, whatsoever is memorable in the places they go to, into all of which the tutors or servants ought to make diligent inquiry. As for triumphs, masques, feasts, weddings, funerals, capital executions, and such shows, men do not need to be put in mind of them; yet they are not to be neglected.

If you want a young man to put his travel into a short time, and in that time to gather much, he must (as I have already said) have some entrance into the language before he goes, and have a servant or tutor who knows the country. In addition,

- let him carry with him also some card or book, describing the country where he travels, which will be a good key to his inquiry;
- let him also keep a diary;
- let him not stay long in one city or town—more or less, as the place deserves—but ·in any case· not long;

- indeed, when he stays in one city or town, let him change his lodging from one end and part of the town to another, which is a good way to enlarge his acquaintance;

- let him shelter himself from the company of his countrymen, and eat in places where there is good company of the nation where he travels;

- let him, when moving from one place to another, procure recommendation to some person of quality residing in the place he is going to, so that he may use his favour in those things he desires to see or know: thus he may abridge his travel with much profit. As for the acquaintance which is to be sought in travel, what is most profitable is acquaintance with the secretaries and attachés of ambassadors, for that enables him while travelling in one country to take in the experience of many;

- let him also visit eminent persons of all kinds who are of great name abroad, that he may be able to tell how the life agrees with the fame.

- Quarrels are to be avoided with care and discretion; they are commonly about mistresses, health-drinking, place [see Glossary], and words; and let a man beware how he keeps company with choleric and quarrelsome persons, for they will draw him into their own quarrels.

- When a traveller returns home, let him not leave the countries where he has travelled altogether behind him, but maintain a correspondence by letters with those of his acquaintance who are most worthy; and

- let his travel appear rather in his discourse than in his apparel or gesture; and in his discourse let him be advised in his answers rather than forward to tell stories; and let it appear that he does not change his own country's manners

for those of foreign parts, but only plants some flowers of what he has learned abroad into the customs of his own country.

19. Empire

It is a miserable state of mind to have few things to desire, and many things to fear; and yet that commonly is the case of kings, who—being at the highest—•have nothing to desire, which makes their minds more languishing; and •have many representations of perils and shadows, which makes their minds less clear; and this is one reason for the effect that the Scripture speaks of, ‘that the king’s heart is inscrutable’ [‘The heart of kings is unsearchable’ (*Proverbs* 5:3).] Because a multitude of anxieties and a lack of some predominant desire that would marshal and put in order all the rest, makes any man’s heart hard to find or fathom. So it happens that princes [see Glossary] often make desires for themselves, and set their hearts upon toys: sometimes upon a building, sometimes upon erecting an order, sometimes upon the advancing of a person, sometimes upon obtaining excellency in some art or feat of the hand, such as

- Nero for playing on the harp,
- Domitian for certainty of the hand with the arrow,
- Commodus for playing at fencing,
- Caracalla for driving chariots,

and the like. This seems incredible to those who do not know the principle that the mind of man is more cheered and refreshed by profiting in small things than by sticking at great ones. We see also that kings who have been fortunate conquerors in their first years—

it being not possible for them to go forward infinitely, but they must have some check or stop in their

fortunes

—turn in their later years to being superstitious and melancholy; as did Alexander the Great, Diocletian, and (in our memory) Charles V and others. For he who is accustomed to going forward, and finds a stop, falls out of his own favour and is not the thing he was.

To speak now of the true temper [= construction] of empire: it is a thing rare and hard to keep, for both temper and distemper [= misconstruction] consist of contraries; but it is one thing to mingle contraries, another to interchange them. The answer of Apollonius to Vespasian is full of excellent instruction. Vespasian asked him ‘What created Nero’s overthrow?’ He answered: ‘Nero could play and tune the harp well; but in government he sometimes used to wind the pins too high, and sometimes let them down too low.’ And it is certain that nothing destroys authority so much as the unequal and untimely interchange of power pressed too far and power relaxed too much.

The ‘wisdom’ of recent times in princes’ affairs consists in •fine speeches, and •shiftings of dangers and mischiefs [see Glossary] when they are near, rather than •solid and grounded courses ·of action· to keep dangers at a distance. This ·procedure of attending to dangers only when they are close· is only to challenge fortune to a duel; and let men beware of neglecting ·their affairs·, allowing matter of trouble to be prepared. For no man can forbid the spark ·that will kindle trouble· or tell whence it may come. The difficulties in princes’ business are many and great; but the greatest difficulty is often in their own mind. For it is common with princes (says Tacitus) to will contradictories: *Sunt plerumque regum voluntates vehementes, et inter se contrariæ* [‘The desires of monarchs are generally impetuous and conflicting among themselves.’] For it is the solecism of power to think to command the end yet not endure the means.

Kings have to deal with

- (1) their neighbours,
- (2) their wives,
- (3) their children,
- (4) their prelates or clergy,
- (5) their nobles,
- (6) their second nobles or gentlemen,
- (7) their merchants,
- (8) their commons, and
- (9) their men of war

and from all these arise dangers if care and circumspection are not used.

(1) For their neighbours no general rule can be given (the occasions are so variable), except for one that always holds. It is that princes should keep due sentinel, so that none of their neighbours overgrow (by increase of territory, by embracing of trade, by approaches, or the like) to such an extent that they become more able to be an annoyance than they were; and this is generally the work of standing counsels to foresee and to hinder it. During that triumvirate of kings, Henry VIII of England, Francis I of France, and Charles V, Emperor, there was such a watch kept that none of the three could win a square foot of ground,⁶⁰ without the other two immediately balancing it, either by confederation or (if necessary) by a war; and would not in any way take up a peace that must be constantly paid for; and the like was done by the league (which the historian Guicciardini says was the security of Italy) made between

- Ferdinando, King of Naples,
- Lorenzo de Medici, potentate of Florence, and
- Ludovico Sforza, potentate of Milan.

Some of the schoolmen hold that a war cannot justly be

made except on a previous injury or provocation; but that is wrong, for there is no doubt that a just fear of an imminent danger, though no blow was given, is a lawful cause of a war.

(2) For their wives, there are cruel examples of them. Livia is notorious for the poisoning of her husband, the Roman Emperor Augustus; Roxolana, Solyman's wife, brought about destruction of that renowned prince, Sultan Mustapha, and otherwise troubled his house and succession; the Queen of Edward II of England had the principal hand in the deposing and murder of her husband.

This kind of danger is to be feared chiefly when the wives have plots for the raising of their own children, or else when they are adulteresses.

(3) For their children, dangers from them have been many; and the entering of fathers into suspicion of their children has always been unfortunate. The destruction of Mustapha (whom I named before) was so fatal to Solyman's line that the succession of the Turks from Solyman until this day is suspected to be untrue and of strange blood; and that Selymus II was thought to be illegitimate. The destruction of Crispus, a young prince of great promise, by his father Constantinus the Great, was in like manner fatal to his house; for both Constantinus and Constance, his sons, died violent deaths; and Constantius, his other son, did little better—he died indeed of sickness, but only after Julianus had taken arms against him. The destruction of Demetrius, son to Philip II of Macedon, turned upon the father, who died of repentance over having had him killed. There have been few if any examples of this where such distrust did the fathers any good, except where the sons were openly up in arms against the father, as was Selymus I against Bajazet, and the three sons of Henry II, King of England.

⁶⁰ [Bacon wrote 'a palm of ground']

(4) There is also danger from their prelates when they are proud and great, as was the case in the times of Anselm and Thomas Becket, Archbishops of Canterbury, who almost fought with their kings, cross against sword; yet they had to deal with strong and haughty kings—William Rufus, Henry I and Henry II. The danger is not from that ecclesiastical-state except when it has a dependence on foreign authority; or when the churchmen come in and are elected, not by the choice of the King or particular patrons, but by the people.

(5) To keep their nobles at a distance is not amiss; but to depress them may make a king more absolute, but less safe and less able to do whatever he wants, perform anything that he desires. I have noted it in my History of Henry VII of England, who depressed his nobility, so that his times were full of difficulties and troubles; for the nobility, though they continued to be loyal to him, did not co-operate with him in his business; so that in effect he had to do everything himself.

(6) There is not much danger from their second nobles, because they are dispersed. They may sometimes talk loftily, but that does little hurt; besides, they are a counterpoise to the higher nobility, not letting them grow too potent; and—lastly—being the most immediate in authority over the common people, they are best at calming popular commotions.

(7) Their merchants are *vena porta*,⁶¹ and if they do not flourish, a kingdom may have good limbs but will have empty veins and will nourish little. Taxes and duties upon them seldom do good to the king's revenue, for what he wins in one part of the country he loses in another; and what he wins by

increasing the particular rates he loses by the decrease in the total bulk of trading.

(8) There is little danger from the commons except where they have powerful heads, or where you meddle with what is important in their religion or customs or means of life.

(9) For their men of war, it is a dangerous state where they live and remain in a body and are used to donatives [see Glossary], of which we see examples in the Janizaries⁶² and Prætorian bands of Rome; but training men and arming them •in several places, •under several commanders, and •without donatives are things of defence and no danger.

Princes are like heavenly bodies which cause good or evil times, and have much veneration but no rest. All precepts concerning kings are in effect contained in those two reminders: *Memento quod es homo* and *Memento quod es Deus* or *vice Dei*.⁶³ One bridles their power and the other their will.

20. Counsel

The greatest trust between man and man is the trust of giving counsel; for in other confidences men commit the parts of life, their lands, their goods, their children, their credit, some particular affair; but to those whom they make their counsellors they commit *everything*; by how much the more they are obliged to all faith and integrity. The wisest princes need not think that reliance on counsel in any way lessens their greatness or detracts from their sufficiency. God himself is not without counsel, but has made it one

⁶¹ [The great vessel that conveys enriched blood to the liver.]

⁶² [bodyguards of the Turkish sultans]

⁶³ ['Remember that you are a man', and 'Remember that you are a God' or 'the representative of a God'.]

⁶⁴ [His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace' [Isaiah 9:6]]

of the great names of his blessed Son, 'The Counsellor'.⁶⁴ Solomon has pronounced that 'in counsel is stability.'⁶⁵ Things will have their first or second agitation: if they are not tossed on the arguments of counsel, they will be tossed on the waves of fortune, and be full of inconstancy, doing and undoing, like the reeling of a drunken man. Solomon's son ·Rehoboam· found the force of counsel, as his father saw the necessity for it; for the beloved kingdom of God was first torn and broken by bad counsel. There are two things that are always the best signs for us that counsel is bad: **(i)** that the person giving the counsel is too young, and **(ii)** that the content of the counsel is too violent.

The ancient times set forth in figure [i.e. in metaphorical or allegorical terms] both **(i)** the incorporation and inseparable conjunction of counsel with kings, and **(ii)** the wise and politic use of counsel by kings. **(i)** They say that Jupiter married Metis, which signifies counsel; by which they mean that sovereignty is married to counsel; and **(ii)** they say that after Jupiter was married to Metis, she conceived by him and was with child; but Jupiter did not allow her to stay till she gave birth, but *ate her up*, whereby he became himself with child, and gave birth to Pallas, armed, out of his head. [Hesiod, *Theogony*.] Which monstrous fable contains a secret of empire, how kings are to make use of their council of state; first, they ought to refer matters to their council, which is the first begetting or impregnation; but when plans are developed, moulded, and shaped in the womb of their counsel, and grow ripe and ready to be brought forth, the kings should not allow their council to go through with the resolution and direction, as if it depended on them; but should take the matter back into their own hands, and make it appear to the world that the decrees and final directions (which, because they come

forth with prudence and power, are likened to Pallas, armed) came from themselves; and not only from their authority but (the more to add reputation to themselves) from their head and planning skill.

Let me now speak of the inconveniences of counsel, and of the remedies. The inconveniences that have been noted in calling and using counsel are three: **(1)** the revealing of affairs, by which they become less secret; **(2)** the weakening of the authority of princes, as if they were less of themselves; and **(3)** the danger of being unfaithfully counselled, and more for the good of those who counsel than of him who is counselled. For these inconveniences, the doctrine of Italy and practice of France in some kings' times has introduced cabinet councils; a remedy worse than the disease.

(1) As to secrecy, princes are not bound to communicate all matters with all counsellors, but may extract and select; neither is it necessary that he who consults about what he *should* do should declare what he *will* do; but let princes beware that the revealing of their affairs comes not from themselves; and, as for cabinet councils, it may be their motto *Plenus rimarum sum* ['I am full of outlets', Terence, *Eunuchus*.] One futile person who makes it his glory to tell will do more harm than many who know it is their duty to conceal. It is true, some affairs require extreme secrecy, which will hardly go beyond one or two persons besides the king. Those counsels can be prosperous; for besides the secrecy they commonly go on constantly in one spirit of direction without distraction; but then it must be a prudent king, such as can grind with a hand-mill,⁶⁶ and those inward counsellors need also to be wise men, and especially true and trusty to the king's ends. . . .

(2) For weakening of authority, the fable ·about Jupiter

⁶⁵ ['Every purpose is established by counsel: and with good advice make war.' [Proverbs 20:18.]]

⁶⁶ [meaning that with a few good counsellors he can manage without a complicated machinery of government.]

and Metis, mentioned above· shows the remedy; indeed, the majesty of kings is exalted rather than diminished when they are in the chair of council; and no prince was ever bereaved of his dependencies by his council, except where there was either an over-greatness in one counsellor, or an over-strict combination in several of them; and these are things soon found and remedied.

(3) As for the last inconvenience, that men will counsel with an eye to themselves; certainly *non inveniet fidem super terram* [‘He shall not find faith upon the earth’, *Luke 18:8*] is meant of the nature of those times, and not of all particular persons. There are people in nature who are faithful and sincere, plain and direct, not crafty and underhanded; let princes above all draw to themselves such natures. Besides, counsellors are not commonly so united that they do not stand watch over one another; so that if any of them gives his advice on the basis of faction or private purposes, that commonly comes to the king’s ear. But the best remedy is for princes to know their counsellors as well as their counsellors know them. And on the other side, counsellors should not be too curious about their sovereign’s personal affairs. The true composition of a counsellor is to be skilful in their master’s business rather than in his nature; for then he is likely to advise him, and not to cater to his mood.

It is especially useful to princes to take the opinions of their council both separately and together; for private opinion is more free, but opinion given in the presence of others is more reverend. In private, men are more bold in their own attitudes; and in consort they hesitate because they are more liable to opposition from others’ attitudes; therefore it is good to take both—of the inferior sort rather in private to

preserve freedom, of the greater rather in consort to preserve respect.

It is in vain for princes to take counsel concerning *matters* if they do not likewise take counsel concerning *persons*; for all matters are like dead images, and the life of the execution of affairs rests on the good choice of persons. Neither is it enough to consult concerning persons *secundum genera* [‘according to classes’] what the kind and character of the person should be; for the greatest errors are committed, and the most judgment is shown, in the choice of individuals. . . .⁶⁷ It was truly said, *Optimi consilarii mortui* [‘The best counsellors are the dead.’] Books will speak plainly when counsellors are afraid to speak; so it is good to be familiar with them, specially with books by people who have themselves been actors on the political stage.

The councils at this day in most places are merely informal meetings, where matters are discussed rather than debated; and they go too quickly to their conclusion in the order or act of council. It would be better in weighty causes if the matter were propounded one day and not further discussed till the next day. So was it done *In nocte consilium*,⁶⁸ the commission of union between England and Scotland, which was a grave and orderly assembly.

I commend set days for individuals’ petitions; for **(i)** it gives the petitioners more certainty for their attendance, and **(ii)** it frees the meetings for state matters that they may *hoc agere*.⁶⁹

In choice of committees for preparing business to be considered by the council, it is better to choose indifferent [see Glossary] persons than to make an indifferency by putting into the committee those who are strong on both sides.

⁶⁷ [The ellipsis replaces a clause in which Bacon likens judging *secundum genera* to drawing conclusions from ‘an idea or mathematical description’.]

⁶⁸ [Latin for ‘In the night-time council’]

⁶⁹ [[Latin for ‘get on with it’.]

I also commend standing commissions—e.g. for trade, for treasure, for war, for lawsuits, for some provinces; for where there are various particular councils, and only one council of state (as it is in Spain), they are in effect no more than standing commissions, except that they have greater authority.

Let such as are to inform councils out of their particular professions (as lawyers, seamen, coin-makers, and the like) be first heard before committees and then before the council, as occasion serves; and let them not come in multitudes, or in the manner of tribunes [= spokesmen for the particular groups], for that is to clamour councils, not to inform them.

A long table, a square table, seats around the walls—these seem to be things of form, but they are really things of substance. At a long table a few at the upper end in effect sway all the business, whereas in the other form⁷⁰ there is more use of the opinions of the counsellors who sit lower.

When a king presides in council, let him beware of revealing too much his own attitude in the issue he presents; if he does, counsellors will simply take the wind of him, and instead of giving free counsel will sing him a song of *Placebo* [Latin for 'I will please you·].

21. Delays

Fortune is like the market, where, many times, if you can stay a little, the price will fall; and again it is sometimes like the Cumæan Sibyl's offer, which at first offers the commodity at full price, then consumes part of it, and then another part, and still holds up the price. . . . There is surely no greater wisdom than to time well the beginnings and onsets of things. Dangers are no more light if they once seem light;

and more dangers have deceived men than have forced them. Indeed, it would be better to meet some dangers half-way, even if they are nowhere near, than to keep too long a watch upon their approaches; for if a man watch too long, he will probably fall asleep. On the other side, to be deceived by too long shadows (as some have been when the moon was low, and shone on their enemies' backs), and so to rush off before the time, or to teach dangers to come on by arming against them too early, is another extreme. The ripeness or unripeness of the occasion (as I said) must always be well weighed; and generally it is good to commit the beginnings of all great actions to Argus with his hundred eyes, and the ends to Briareus with his hundred hands, first to watch and then to speed; for the helmet of Pluto, which makes the politic man go invisible, is secrecy in the council and speed in the execution; for when execution is begun, there is no secrecy comparable to speed, like the motion of a bullet in the air, which flies so quickly that it outruns the eye.

22. Cunning

We take cunning for a crooked wisdom; and certainly there is great difference between a cunning man and a wise man, not only in point of honesty, but in point of ability. There are people who can pack the cards [i.e. can organise the cards in a way that gives them an unfair advantage], yet cannot play well; and similarly there are some who are good in canvasses and factions but are otherwise weak men. Again, it is one thing to understand persons, and another thing to understand matters; for many are perfect in men's humours that are not greatly capable of the real part of business, which is the constitution of one who has studied men more than books.

⁷⁰ [meaning 'at the square table'? But who 'sits lower' at a square table?]

Such men are fitter for practice than for counsel, and they are good only in their own alley. Set them to do buusiness with new men and they lose their aim; so that the old rule:

To know a fool from a wise man, *Mitte ambos nudos ad ignotos, et videbis* ['Send them both naked among strangers, and then you will see']

scarcely holds for them. . . .

It is a point of cunning to watch *with your eye* the person you are speaking with, as the Jesuits give it in precept; for there are many wise men who have secret hearts and tranparent faces; yet this would sometimes be done with a demure lowering of your eye, as the Jesuits also do.

Another is that when you have anything to obtain. . . .you entertain and distract the person with whom you are dealing with some other discourse, that he be not too much awake to make objections.⁷¹ I knew a counsellor and secretary who never came to Queen Elizabeth of England with ·parliamentary· bills to sign without first putting her into some state discourse so that she might attend less to the bills. . . .

Breaking off in the midst of what you were about to say, as if you took yourself up [i.e. saw a need to correct what you were saying], creates in him whom you confer with a greater appetite to know more.

Because it works better when any thing seems to be got from you by question than if you offer it of yourself, you may lay a bait for a question by showing another facial appearance than your usual one, so as to give occasion for the party ·you are conversing with· to ask what the matter is of the change, as Nehemiah did: 'And I had not before that time been sad before the king.' [*Nehemiah* 2:1]

In things that are displeasing and need delicate handling,

it is good to have the ice broken by someone whose words are of less weight, and to reserve •the more weighty voice to come in as if by chance, so that •he may be asked the question on [i.e. as something arising from] the other's speech; as Narcissus did in relating to ·the emperor· Claudius the marriage of Messalina and Silius.

In things that a man would not ·want to· be seen in himself, it is a point of cunning to borrow the name of the world, e.g. saying 'The world says' or 'There is a speech abroad'.

I knew someone who, when he wrote a letter, would put the most important material in a postscript, as if it had been a triviality.

Someone else I knew, when it was his turn to speak, would pass over what he mainly intended to say, and go forth and come back again, and speak of it as something he had almost forgotten.

Some arrange to be surprised at times when it is likely that the party they work upon will suddenly come upon them, finding them with a letter in their hand, or doing something that they are not accustomed to, so that they may be questioned upon the things which of themselves they are desirous to utter.

It is a point of cunning to let fall those words in a man's own name which he would have another man learn and use, and thereupon take advantage. I knew two who were competitors for the secretary's place in Queen Elizabeth's time, and yet kept on good terms with one another, and would confer one with another upon the ·royal· business; and a one of them said that to be a secretary in the decline of a monarchy was a ticklish thing,⁷² and that he did not desire it. ♪ The other caught up those words, and discoursed

⁷¹ [Bacon presumably meant: 'not too much awake, i.e. not awake enough to make objections'.]

⁷² [i.e. a job requiring great delicacy and tact]

with various friends of his, saying that he had no reason to desire to be secretary during the decline of a monarchy. The first man learned of this and arranged for it to be told to the queen, who was so offended by the mention of a decline of the monarchy that she would never after hear of the other's suit.

There is a cunning . . . in which what a man says to another he lays it as if another had said it to him; and, to say truth, it is not easy, when such a matter passed between two, to make it appear from which of them it first began. . . .

Some people have in readiness so many tales and stories that they can wrap into a tale anything that they want to get across, as Nathan did when he reproved David for his criminality with Bathsheba.⁷³ The rest of the sentence:

which serves both to keep themselves more in guard, and to make others carry it with more pleasure.

Its probable meaning:

which helps the tale-teller to keep himself safe when reproving someone who has power over him, and makes what he actually says (as distinct from what he is implying) more acceptable to his listener.

It is a good point of cunning for a man to shape in his own words the answer he wants to have; for that makes the other party less reluctant to give that answer.

It is strange how long some men will lie in wait to say something they desire to say, and how indirectly they will come at it, beating over many other matters in order to come near it. It is a thing of great patience, but yet of much use.

A sudden, bold, and unexpected question will often surprise a man, and lay him open, [i.e. reveal any deception he is engaged in]. For example, a man who had changed his name

and was walking—incognito, he hoped—in St Paul's street, someone suddenly came behind him and called him by his true name, whereat he immediately looked back, showing that he answered to that name.

But these small wares and petty points of cunning are infinite, and it would be a good deed to make a list of them; because nothing does more hurt in a state than that cunning men should pass for wise.

But certainly, there are some who know the springs and vicissitudes of business but who cannot enter deeply into the heart of it, like a house that has convenient stairs and entries, but never a fair [see Glossary] room. So you will see them find out faults or weak points in the conclusion, though they are utterly incapable of examining or debating matters; and yet commonly they take advantage of their inability, and would be thought wits of direction. Some build on the abusing of others—putting tricks upon them, as we now say—rather than on soundness of their own proceedings; but Solomon says: *Prudens advertit ad gressus suos; stultus divertit ad dolos*. ['The wise man gives heed to his own footsteps; the fool turns aside to the snare.']. . . .

23. Wisdom for a Man's Self

An ant is a wise creature for itself, but it is a mischievous thing in an orchard or garden; and certainly, men who are great lovers of themselves waste the public. Divide with reason between self-love and society; and be true enough to yourself not to be false to others, specially to your king and country. It is a poor centre of a man's actions, *himself*. It is right **on earth**; for the earth only stands fast upon its own centre; whereas all things that have affinity with **the heavens**

⁷³ [That story is told in 2 *Samuel* 12, a fascinating chapter.]

move upon the centre of something else, which they benefit. The referring of everything to a man's self is more tolerable in a sovereign prince, because a prince is not only himself but his good or evil is at the peril of the public fortune. It is a desperate evil in a servant to a prince or a citizen in a republic if he twists to his own ends any affairs that pass through his hands—ends which must often be at odds with those of his master or state. Therefore, let princes or states choose servants who are not of this kind, unless they mean their service to be made the mere accessory. [That is, unless the prince wants the crooked servant to help *him* in his misdeeds.]

What makes the effect more pernicious is that all proportion is lost. Merely preferring the servant's good to the master's would be disproportion enough; but yet it is a greater extreme when a little good of the servant shall carry things against a great good of the master. And that is the case of bad officers, treasurers, ambassadors, generals, and other false and corrupt servants; who set a bias upon their bowl⁷⁴ of their own petty ends and envies, to the overthrow of their master's great and important affairs; and for the most part, the good such servants receive is after the model [see Glossary] of their own fortune, but the harm they sell for that good is after the model of their master's fortune. And certainly it is the nature of extreme self-lovers that they will set a house on fire if only to cook their eggs; and yet these men often hold credit with their masters, because their concern is only to *please them*, and *profit themselves*; and for either respect they will abandon the good of their master's affairs.

Wisdom for a man's self is, in many of its branches, a depraved thing. It is the wisdom of rats, that will be sure to leave a house somewhat before it falls; it is the wisdom of the

fox, that thrusts out the badger who dug and made room for him; it is the wisdom of crocodiles, that shed tears when they would devour. But what is specially to be noted is that those who (as Cicero says of Pompey) are *sui amantes, sine rivali* ['Lovers of themselves without a rival'] are many times unfortunate: they have all their times sacrificed to themselves, yet they become in the end themselves sacrifices to the inconstancy of fortune, whose wings they thought by their self-wisdom to have pinioned.

24. Innovations

As the births of living creatures are ill-shaped at first, so are all innovations, which are the births of time. But although those who first bring honour into their family are commonly more worthy than most that succeed, the first precedent (if it is good) is seldom attained by imitation; because what is bad for human nature. . . .has a natural motion strongest in continuance, but good. . . .is strongest at first. [The two ellipses in that sentence replace, respectively, 'as it stands, perverted,' and 'as a forced motion'.] Surely, every medicine is an innovation, and he who will not apply new remedies must expect new evils, for time is the greatest innovator; and if time as a matter of course alters things for the worse, and wisdom and counsel will not alter them for the better, what shall be the end? It is true that what is settled by custom is at least *fit*, even if it is not *good*; and things that have long gone together are adapted to one another, as it were, whereas new things do not fit so well; but though they help by their utility, they trouble by their inconformity; besides, they are like strangers, more admired⁷⁵ and less favoured. All this is true, if time

⁷⁴ [This refers to lawn-bowling, where every ball has a bias.]

⁷⁵ [here = 'wondered at']

stood still; but it moves so much that an awkward retention of custom is as turbulent a thing as an innovation; and those who reverence old times too much are but a scorn to the new. It would be good if men in their innovations would follow the example of time itself, which indeed innovates greatly, but quietly, and by degrees scarce to be perceived; for otherwise whatever is new is unlooked for, and time mends some and injures others; and he who is helped takes it for a fortune, and thanks the time; and he who is hurt takes it for a wrong, and imputes it to the author. [In other words: someone for whom things go well thinks that this is a matter of luck, which occurred simply because it was time for it; and someone for whom they go badly thinks he has been wronged and that someone or something caused this.]

It is good, also, not to try experiments in states, unless the necessity is urgent or the utility evident; and it is well to beware that it is the reformation that draws on the change, and not the desire for change that is offered as the excuse for the reformation; and lastly, that the novelty, though not rejected, should be treated with suspicion, and, as the Scripture says, 'That we make a stand upon the ancient way, and then look about us, and discover what is the straight and right way, and so walk in it.' [See *Jeremiah* 6:16.]

25. Dispatch

[For the topic of this essay, see Glossary.]

(i) One of the most dangerous things to business that there can be is *affected dispatch* [i.e. pretending that one is briskly getting on with things, when really one isn't]. It is like what the physicians call predigestion, or hasty digestion, which is sure to fill the body full of crudities and secret seeds of diseases. Therefore, do not measure dispatch by the times

of sitting,⁷⁶ but by the advancement of the business. Just as in races it is not the large stride or high lift that makes the speed, so also in business what procures dispatch is keeping close to the matter, and not addressing too much of it at once. Some people care only to come off speedily *for the time*, or to contrive some false periods of business so that they may seem to be men of dispatch; but it is one thing to abbreviate one's business by contracting it, and another to abbreviate it by lopping bits off. And business so handled at several sittings, or meetings, commonly goes backward and forward in an unsteady manner. I knew a wise man who had it for a byword, when he saw men hasten to a conclusion, to say 'Slow down, so that we may make an end the sooner.'

(ii) On the other side, *true dispatch* is a rich thing; for time is the measure of business, as money is of wares; and business is bought at a high cost where there is small dispatch. The Spartans and Spaniards have been noted to be of small dispatch: *Mi venga la muerte de Spagna*—'Let my death come from Spain', for then it will be sure to be long in coming.

Give good hearing to those who give the first information in business, and hear them out from the beginning rather than interrupting them in the continuance of their speeches. For someone who is put out of his own order will go forward and backward, and be more tedious while he waits upon his memory than he could have been if he had gone on in his own course. . . .

Repetitions commonly involve *loss* of time; but there is no greater *gain* of time than to repeat often the state of the question; for that chases away many a frivolous speech as it is coming forth. Long and curious [see Glossary] speeches are as fit for dispatch as a robe or mantle with a long train

⁷⁶ [i.e. by how often the relevant committee meets.]

is fit for a race. Prefaces, and quotations and apologies and other speeches that refer to the speaker, are great wastes of time; and though they seem to come from modesty, they are showing off. . . .

Above all things, order and distribution, and singling out of parts, is the life of dispatch, as long as the distribution is not too fine-grained; for he who does not divide will never enter well into business; and he who divides too much will never come out of it clearly. To choose time is to save time; and an unseasonable motion [= 'action taken at the wrong time'] is merely beating the air. There are three parts of business: the preparation, the debate or examination, and the perfection ['the finishing off']. If you are looking for dispatch, let only the middle ·one of these· be the work of many, and the first and third ·of them· the work of few. Proceeding upon something conceived in writing does for the most part facilitate dispatch; for even if it is wholly rejected, that negative is more pregnant with direction than an indefinite ·positive· conclusion is, just as ashes are more generative than dust.

26. Seeming wise

It has been an opinion that the French are wiser than they seem, and the Spaniards seem wiser than they are; but however it may be between nations, certainly there are such differences between man and man; for, as the apostle says of godliness, 'Having a show of godliness, but denying the power thereof.'⁷⁷ so certainly there are people who in points of wisdom and sufficiency do nothing, or very solemnly do little; *magno conatu nugas* ['Trifles with great effort.'] It is a ridiculous thing, and fit for a satire to persons of judgment, to see what

lengths these formalists will go to, and what prospectives they will offer, to make a surface seem to be a body that has depth and bulk. Some are so close and reserved that they will show their wares only by a dim light, and seem always to keep something back; and when they are aware that they are speaking of what they do not well know, they want to seem to others to know that of which they may not well speak. Some help themselves with countenance and gesture, and are *wise by signs*; as Cicero says of Piso, that when he answered him 'With one brow raised to your forehead, the other bent downward to your chin, you answer that cruelty does not delight you.'⁷⁸ Some think they can carry the day by peremptorily speaking a great word, and go on to force their way into intellectual territory that they are not entitled to occupy. Some, if something is beyond their reach, will seem to despise or make light of it as irrelevant or curious [see Glossary], wanting to have their ignorance to seem like judgment. Some are always ready with a distinction, and commonly by confusing men with a subtlety, flatten the matter; of whom A. Gellius says *Hominem delirum, qui verborum minutiis rerum frangit pondera* ['A foolish man, who fritters away the weight of matters by fine-spun trifling on words.'] Of which kind also Plato, in his *Protagoras*, brings Prodicus into scorn, and makes him make a speech that consists of distinctions from the beginning to the end.

Generally such men, in all deliberations, are at ease on the negative side, finding it easier to present difficulties and objections than to originate. And easier to claim credit for objecting and foretelling difficulties; because ·they claim·

when propositions are denied, there is an end of them, whereas if they are allowed there is more work to be done,

⁷⁷ *Second Timothy* 3:5

⁷⁸ [*Respondes, altero ad frontem sublato, altero ad mentum supercilio depresso, crudelitatem tibi non placere*]

which false point of wisdom is the bane of business.

To conclude, no decaying merchant or inward beggar has as many tricks to uphold the credit of his wealth as these empty persons have to maintain the credit of their sufficiency. Men who *seem* wise may work hard to be well thought-of, but let no man choose them for employment; for certainly you were better to take for business a man who is somewhat absurd than one who is over-formal.

27. Friendship

Aristotle said in his *Politics* 'Whoever is delighted in solitude, is either a wild beast or a god.' It would have been hard for him to put more truth and untruth together in few words than in that speech. For it is most true that a natural and secret hatred and aversion towards society in any man has somewhat of the savage beast; but it is most *untrue* that it should have any character at all of the divine nature, unless it comes not out of pleasure in solitude but out of a love and desire to sequester oneself for a higher conversation, such as is found to have been *falsely and feignedly* engaged in by some of the heathen, such as

- Epimenides, the Candian,
- Numa, the Roman,
- Empedocles, the Sicilian, and
- Apollonius, of Tyana.

and *truly and really* in various ancient hermits and holy fathers of the church. But little do men perceive what solitude is, and how far it extends; for where there is no love a crowd is not company, and faces are only a gallery of pictures, and talk is merely a tinkling cymbal. The Latin adage meets with it a little: *Magna civitas, magna solitudo* ['Great city, great wilderness'], because in a great town friends

are scattered, so that there is little of the fellowship that is in smaller neighbourhoods; but we may go further and affirm most truly that it is a mere and miserable solitude to lack true friends, without which the world is but a wilderness; and. . . whoever in the frame of his nature and affections is unfit for friendship, he takes this from the beasts, not from humanity.

A **principal fruit of friendship** is the ease and discharge of the fulness and swellings of the heart, which are caused and induced by passions of all kinds. We know that diseases of stoppings and suffocations are the most dangerous in the body, and it is not much otherwise in the mind. You may take sarsaparilla to open the liver, steel to open the spleen, flower of sulphur for the lungs, castoreum for the brain; but the only recipe that opens the heart is a true friend, to whom you may impart griefs, joys, fears, hopes, suspicions, counsels, and whatever lies upon the heart to oppress it, ·doing this· in a kind of civil shrift or confession.

It is a strange thing to observe how highly great kings and monarchs value this fruit of friendship I am speaking of; so highly that in many cases they purchase it at the risk of their own safety and greatness; for princes, in regard of the distance of their fortune from that of their subjects and servants, can gather this fruit only if (to make themselves capable of it) they raise some persons to be as it were companions, and almost equals to themselves, which often leads to difficulties. Modern languages give to such persons the name of 'favourites' or 'privadoes', as if it were a mere matter of grace or conversation; but the Roman name attains the true use and cause thereof, naming them *participes curarum* ['partakers of cares'], for that is what ties the knot. And we see plainly that this has been done not only by weak and passionate princes but ·also· by the wisest and most politic that ever reigned, who have often joined to themselves

some of their servants, whom they have called 'friends', and allowed others likewise to call them in the same manner, using the word that is received between private men.

L. Sylla, when he commanded Rome, raised Pompey (after surnamed the Great) to such a height that Pompey boasted that he was more than Sylla's equal in battle. After some hostilities, Sylla began to speak grandiosely; Pompey turned upon him again and in effect told him to be quiet, because the rising sun was adored by more men than the setting sun. With Julius Caesar, Decimus Brutus had obtained so much interest that Caesar set him down in his testament as heir in remainder after his nephew; and this was the man that had power with him [i.e. had enough influence over him] to draw him to his death. For when Caesar would have discharged the senate, influenced by some bad omens and especially a dream of Calpurnia, this man lifted him gently by the arm out of his chair, telling him he hoped he would not dismiss the senate till his wife had dreamed a better dream. And it seems that his favour was so great that Antonius, in a letter that is quoted verbatim in one of Cicero's Philippics, calls him *venefica* ['witch'], as if he had enchanted Caesar. Augustus raised Agrippa (though of mean [see Glossary] birth) to such a height that when he consulted with Maecenas about the marriage of his daughter Julia, Maecenas took the liberty of telling him that he must either marry his daughter to Agrippa or take away Agrippa's life; there was no third way, he had made him so great. [Then two more such anecdotes, involving Roman emperors and the lower-ranked people they condescendingly took as 'friends'.] Now, if these princes had been as a Trajan, or a Marcus Aurelius, one might have thought that this conduct had come from an abundant goodness of nature; but being men so clever, of such strength and

severity of mind, and such extreme lovers of themselves, as all these princes were, it proves most plainly that they found their own happiness (though as great as ever happened to mortal men) to be a mere half-piece unless they could have a friend to make it entire. And yet they were princes that had wives, sons, nephews; yet all these could not supply the comfort of friendship.

It is not to be forgotten what Comineus observes concerning his first master, Duke Charles the Hardy, namely that he would not communicate his secrets to anyone, least of all the secrets that troubled him most. He goes on, and says that towards the Duke's old age this closeness did harm to his understanding. Surely, Comineus might—if he had wanted to—have made the same judgment also concerning his second master, Louis XI, whose closeness was indeed his tormentor. The parable of Pythagoras is dark, but true: *Corne edito*, ['Eat not the heart.'] Certainly, if one wanted to give it a hard phrase, those who lack friends to open themselves up to are cannibals of their own hearts; but one thing is most admirable (I shall conclude this **first fruit of friendship** with it), which is that this communicating of a man's self to his friend has two contrary effects, for it redoubles joys, and cuts griefs in half; for anyone who imparts his joys to his friend joys the more; and anyone who imparts his griefs to his friend grieves the less.⁷⁹ So that its power to operate upon a man's mind resembles the power the alchemists used to attribute to their 'stone' for a man's body, namely that it works all contrary effects but still to the good and benefit of nature. But yet, without bringing alchemists into the story, there is a manifest image of this in the ordinary course of nature; for in bodies union strengthens and cherishes any natural action; and on the other side weakens and dulls any

⁷⁹ [We can see why Bacon called these 'contrary' effects; but they aren't, are they?]

violent impression; and that is how it is with minds.

The **second fruit of friendship** is healthful and sovereign for the understanding, as the first is for the affections; for friendship makes indeed a fair day in the affections from storm and tempests, but it makes daylight in the understanding, out of darkness and confusion of thoughts. This is true not only of faithful counsel that a man receives from his friend; before you come to that, it is certain that when someone has his mind fraught with many thoughts, his wits and understanding do clarify and break up in communicating and discoursing with another; he tosses his thoughts more easily; he marshalls them in a more orderly way; he sees how they look when they are turned into words; eventually he grows wiser than himself, achieving more of this by an hour's discourse than by a day's meditation. It was well said by Themistocles to the king of Persia: 'That speech was like cloth of Arras, opened and put abroad, with the imagery appearing in figure; whereas in thoughts they lie but as in packs.' Neither is this second fruit of friendship in opening the understanding confined only to such friends as are able to give a man counsel (they indeed are best), but even without that a man learns of himself, and brings his own thoughts to light, and sharpens his wits as against a stone that does not itself cut. In a word, it would be better for a man to relate himself to a statue or picture than to allow his thoughts to pass in smother.

Add now, to make this second fruit of friendship complete, another point that lies more open and falls within vulgar [see Glossary] observation, namely faithful counsel from a friend. Heraclitus says well in one of his enigmas 'Dry light is ever the best'; and certain it is that the light that a man receives by counsel from another is drier and purer than what comes from his own understanding and judgment, which is always infused and drenched in his affections and customs. So,

just as there is as much difference between **a** the counsel that a friend gives and **b** what a man gives himself, as there is between **a** the counsel of a friend and **c** the counsel of a flatterer; for there is no such flatterer as is a man's self, and there is no such remedy against flattery of a man's self as the liberty of a friend.

Counsel is of two sorts, one concerning manners, the other concerning business; for the first, the best prescription to keep the mind in health is the faithful admonition [= 'the sincere reprimand'] of a friend. The calling of a man's self to a strict account is a medicine sometimes too piercing and corrosive; reading good books of morality is a little flat and dead; observing our faults in others is sometimes improper for our case; but the best prescription (best to work, and best to take) is the admonition of a friend. It is a strange thing to behold what gross errors and extreme absurdities many people (especially of the greater sort) commit—to the great damage both of their fame and fortune—for lack of a friend to tell them of them. For, as St. James says, they are like men 'that look sometimes into a glass, and presently forget their own shape and favour.' [*James* 1:23] As for business, a man may think if he will that

- two eyes see no more than one; or that
- a gamester always sees more than a looker-on; or that
- a man in anger is as wise as he who has said over the four and twenty letters ·to calm himself·; or that
- a musket may be shot off as well upon the arm as upon a rest;

and other such foolish and high imaginations, thinking himself all in all; but when all is done, the help of good counsel is that which sets business straight. And if any man pland to take counsel by pieces, asking counsel concerning one business of one man, and concerning another business of another man, this is well enough (that is to say, better,

perhaps, than if he asked none at all); but he runs two risks. **(i)** One is that he will not be faithfully counselled; for it is a rare thing, unless it is from a perfect and entire friend, to have counsel given that is not bowed and crooked to some ends which the counselor has. And **(ii)** the other risk is that he shall have counsel given, hurtful and unsafe (though with good intention), and mixed partly of illness and partly of remedy. It is as though you were to •call a physician who was thought good for the cure of the disease you complain of, but is unacquainted with your body;

and therefore may put you in a way for a present cure, but overthrows your health in some other way, and so •cure the disease and kill the patient. But a friend who is wholly acquainted with a man's estate will •be cautious about how by furthering any present business he might rush into some other inconvenience, and therefore will •not rely upon scattered counsels, which will distract and mislead rather than settle and direct.

After these two noble fruits of friendship (peace in the affections, and support of the judgment), there follows **the last fruit**, which is, like the pomegranate, full of many kernels. I mean *aid*, and having a part in all actions and occasions. Here the best way to represent the manifold uses of friendship is to calculate and see how many things there are that a man cannot do for himself; and then it will appear that it was a sparing speech of the ancients to say that 'a friend is another himself', because someone's friend is far more than himself. Men have their time, and die many times in desire of some things that they principally take to heart: the welfare of a child, the finishing of a work, or the like. If a man has a true friend, he may rest almost secure that the care of those things will continue after him; so that a man has, as it were, two lives in his desires. He has a body, and that body is confined to a place; but where there

is friendship, all offices of life are—as it were—granted to him and his deputy, for he may exercise them through his friend. How many things are there which a man cannot unblushingly say or do himself? A man can scarcely allege his own merits with modesty, much less extol them; a man sometimes cannot bring himself to supplicate or beg or other things of that sort; but all these things are graceful in a friend's mouth, which are blushing in a man's own. So, again, a man's person has many proper relations which he cannot put off. He cannot speak to his son but as a father; to his wife but as a husband; to his enemy but upon terms; whereas a friend may speak as the case requires and not as it fits with the person. But to enumerate these things would be endless; I have given the rule, where a man cannot fitly play his own part. If he has no friend, he may quit the stage.

28. Expense

Riches are for spending, and spending is for honour and good actions; so that extraordinary expense must be limited by the worth of the occasion. A man may properly serve his country or the kingdom of heaven through the sacrifice of everything he has; but *ordinary* expense ought to be limited by a man's estate, and governed in a way that

- keeps it within his range,
- is not subject to deceit and abuse by servants, and
- is ordered in such way that the bills are less than they may seem to outsiders.

Certainly, if a man wants to keep even, his ordinary expenses ought to be only **half** of his receipts, and only **one-third** if he wants to grow rich. It is no baseness for the greatest to descend and look into their own estate. Some forbear to do so, not out of negligence alone but fearing to bring

themselves into melancholy through finding their estate to be broken. But wounds cannot be cured without searching. He who cannot look into his own estate at all, needs both •to choose well those whom he employs, and •to change them often. New •servants• are more timorous and less tricky. He who can only seldom look into his estate should turn all to certainties. If a man is plentiful in some kind of expense, he needs to be equally saving in some other: if plentiful in diet, saving in apparel; if plentiful in the hall, saving in the stable; and the like. For he who is plentiful in expenses of all kinds will hardly be preserved from decay. In clearing his estate •from debts and obligations•, a man may as well hurt himself by being too sudden, as in letting debts run on too long; for hasty selling is commonly as disadvantageous as interest. Besides, he who clears •his debts• at once will relapse; for, finding himself out of •immediate• difficulties, he will revert to his •bad old• customs; but he who clears them by degrees induces a habit of frugality, and gains upon his mind as well as upon his estate. Certainly, someone who has a state to repair, may not despise small things; and it is commonly less dishonourable to abridge petty charges than it is to stoop to petty gettings. A man ought warily to begin charges that will continue, once they are begun; but in matters that do not return, he may be more magnificent.

29. The true greatness of kingdoms and estates

The speech of the Athenian Themistocles, which was haughty and arrogant in taking so much to himself, would have been a grave and wise observation and censure when applied at large to others. Desired at a feast to touch a lute, he said that

‘He could not fiddle, but yet he could make a small town a great city.’ These words (helped a little with a metaphor) may express two different abilities in those who deal in business of estate; for if a true survey is taken of counsellors and statesmen, there may be found (though rarely) those who can make a small state great, and yet cannot fiddle; as on the other side there will be found a great many who can fiddle very cleverly but yet are far from being able to make a small state great—so far that their gift lies the other way, to bring a great and flourishing estate to ruin and decay. And certainly those degenerate arts and tricks whereby many counsellors and governors gain •favour with their masters and •admiration from the vulgar deserve no better name than *fiddling*; being things that are •pleasing for the time, and graceful to themselves only, rather than •tending to the welfare and advancement of the state they serve. There are also (no doubt) counsellors and governors who may be held sufficient—*negotiis pares* [‘equal to the business’]—able to manage affairs, and to keep them from precipices and manifest mishaps, who nevertheless are far from the ability to raise and amplify an estate in power, means, and fortune.

But be the workmen what they may be, let us speak of the work, that is, the true greatness of kingdoms and estates, and the means thereof. •The upshot of this discussion should be• an argument fit for great and mighty princes to have in their hand, so that neither •by overmeasuring their forces, they lose themselves in vain enterprises, nor (on the other side) •by undervaluing them, they descend to cowardly and feebly timid counsels.

The greatness of an estate does fall under measure of bulk and territory; and the greatness of finances and revenue does fall under computation. The population may appear

⁸⁰ [i.e. by assembling them into countable groups]

by musters,⁸⁰ and the number and greatness of cities and towns by cards and maps; but yet nothing among civil affairs is more subject to error than the right valuation and true judgment concerning the power and forces of an estate. The kingdom of heaven is compared not to any great kernel or nut, but to a grain of mustard-seed,⁸¹ which is one of the least grains, but has in it a property and spirit hastily to get up and spread. So there are •some states that are great in territory yet not apt to become larger or take command of more territory, and •some that have only a small dimension of stem and yet apt to be the foundations of great monarchies.

Walled towns, stored arsenals and armouries, good races of horse, chariots of war, elephants, ordnance, artillery, and the like—all this is only a sheep in a lion's skin unless the breed and disposition of the people are stout and warlike. Indeed, the very number of an army doesn't mean much if the populace is of weak courage; for, as Virgil says, 'It never troubles a wolf how many sheep there are.' The army of the Persians in the plains of Arbela was such a vast sea of people that it somewhat astonished the commanders in Alexander's army, who came to him therefore and wished him to set upon them by night; but he answered that he 'would not pilfer the victory'; and the defeat was easy. When the Armenian Tigranes, being encamped upon a hill with four hundred thousand men, discovered the army of the Romans, being not above fourteen thousand, marching towards him, he made himself merry with it, and said 'Yonder men are too many for an embassy and too few for a fight'; but before the

sun set he found them sufficient to give him the chase with infinite slaughter. Many are the examples of the great odds between number and courage; so that a man may truly make a judgment that the principal point of greatness in any state is to have a race of military men.

Neither is money the sinews of war (as it is trivially said to be), where the sinews of men's arms are failing in a base and effeminate populace. For Solon said well to Cræsus (when in ostentation he showed him his gold) 'Sir, if any other come that has better *iron* than you, he will be master of all this gold.' Therefore, let any prince or state think soberly of his forces, unless his militia of natives is made up of good and valiant soldiers; and on the other side let princes who have subjects of martial disposition know their own strength, unless they are otherwise lacking unto themselves. As for mercenary forces (which is the help in this case •where the native forces are inadequate-), all examples show that any estate or prince who relies on them, though he may spread his feathers for a time, will shed them soon after.

The blessing of Judah and Issachar will never meet.⁸² It will never be that the same people or nation should be both the lion's whelp and the ass between burdens; neither will it be that a people overburdened with taxes should ever become valiant and martial. It is true that when taxes are levied by consent of the estate, they do less to abate men's courage, as it has been seen notably in the excises of the Low Countries and, in some degree, in the subsidies of England.⁸³ For we are now speaking of the heart, and not of the purse;

⁸¹ [The reference is to *Matthew* 13:31 'Another parable put he forth unto them, saying "The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard-seed, which a man took and sowed in his field; which indeed is the least of all seeds; but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof."']

⁸² [Referring to Jacob's words on his death-bed: 'Judah is a lion's whelp; . . . he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion . . . Issachar is a strong ass couching down between two burdens: And he saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant; and he bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute.' [*Genesis* 49:9, 14, 15]

⁸³ [Sums of money voluntarily contributed by the people for the use of the sovereign.]

so that although the same tribute and tax—whether laid by consent or by imposition—is all one to the purse, yet it works differently on the courage. So you may conclude that no populace overcharged with tribute is fit for empire.

States that aim at greatness should be careful not to let their nobility and gentlemen multiply too fast; for that makes the common subject grow to be a peasant and base worker. . . ., in effect merely the gentleman's labourer. Just as you may see that •if you leave your young trees too thick in coppice woods, you will never have clean underwood but only shrubs and bushes, so in countries •if there are too many gentlemen, the commons will be base and you will bring it about that not the hundred poll⁸⁴ will be fit for a helmet, especially with regard to the infantry, which is the nerve of an army. And so there will be great population and little strength. This which I speak of has been nowhere better seen than by comparing England with France; England, though far less in territory and population, has been an overmatch, because the middle people of England make good soldiers, which the peasants of France do not. And herein the scheme of King Henry VII. . . . was profound and admirable; he brought the farms and houses of those who tilled the soil up to a standard; that is, maintained with such a proportion of land unto them as may breed a subject to live in convenient plenty, and no servile condition, and to keep the plough in the hands of the owners, and not mere hirelings; and thus indeed you will attain to the character which Virgil gives to ancient Italy: *Terra potens armis atque ubere glebe* [A land powerful in arms and in productiveness of soil]

Neither is that state (which, for anything I know, is almost peculiar [see Glossary] to England, and hardly to be found anywhere else except perhaps Poland), to be passed

over; I mean the state of free servants and attendants upon noblemen and gentlemen, which are in no way inferior to the yeomanry for arms; and, therefore, out of all question, the •splendour and magnificence, and great retinues, and hospitality of noblemen and gentlemen received into custom, contribute greatly to military greatness, whereas the •close and reserved living of noblemen and gentlemen causes a penury of military forces.

[This next bit leans on a dream of Nebuchadnezzar, reported in *Daniel* 4:10: 'I saw, and behold a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof was great. The tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth: the leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all; the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it.']

By all means, it is to be procured that the trunk of Nebuchadnezzar's tree of monarchy be great enough to bear the branches and the boughs; that is, that the *natural* subjects of the crown or state bear a sufficient proportion to the *stranger* subjects that they govern. Therefore, all states that are liberal in naturalizing strangers are fit for empire. •Without that, they are not•, for to think that a handful of people can, with the greatest courage and •best• policy in the world, embrace too large an extent of dominion—it may hold for a time, but it will fail suddenly. The Spartans were choosy about naturalization; so while they kept their compass, they stood firm; but when they spread and their boughs were becoming too great for their stem, they suddenly became a windfall. In this matter, no state was ever so open to receiving strangers into their body as were the Romans; and that fitted well with them, for they grew to be the greatest monarchy. Their manner was to grant naturalization (which

⁸⁴ [presumably meaning 'not one head in a hundred'.]

they called *jus civitatis* ['right of citizenship']) and to grant it in the highest degree, i.e. not only

- *jus commercii* ['right of trading'],
- *jus connubii* ['right of intermarriage'],
- *jus hæreditatis* ['right of inheritance']

but also

- *jus suffragii* ['right to vote'],
- *jus honorum* ['right of honours']

and this ·was applicable· not only to singular persons alone, but likewise to whole families—indeed, to cities and sometimes to nations. Add to this their custom of installing colonies, whereby the Roman plant was removed into the soil of other nations, and—putting both constitutions together—one might say that •it was not the Romans that spread upon the world, but it was the world that spread upon the Romans; and that •this was the sure way of greatness. I have marvelled sometimes at Spain, how they clasp and contain such large dominions with so few natural Spaniards; but sure the whole compass of Spain is a very great body of a tree, far above Rome and Sparta at the first; and, besides, though they have not had the custom of naturalizing liberally, they have had something that is next to it, namely to employ almost indifferently all nations in their militia of ordinary soldiers—indeed sometimes in their highest commands. It seems that right now they are aware of this lack of natives, as appears from the laws and ordinances now published.

It is certain that sedentary and within-door arts and delicate manufactures (that require rather the finger than the arm), have in their nature a contrariety to a military disposition; and generally all warlike people are a little idle, and love danger better than work; and they must not be too much trained in it—i.e. in delicate in-door work—if they

are to be preserved in vigour. So it was a great advantage in the ancient states of Sparta, Athens, Rome and others that they had the use of slaves, which commonly dealt with those manufactures; but that [= slavery] is abolished in greatest part by the Christian law. What comes nearest to it is •to leave those ·in-door· arts chiefly to strangers (who for that purpose, are more easily received), and •to contain the principal bulk of the vulgar natives within those three kinds:

- tillers of the ground,
- free servants, and
- handicraftsmen of strong and manly arts such as smiths, masons, carpenters, etc.

not counting professional soldiers.

But above all, for empire and greatness, it matters most that a nation professes arms as their principal honour, study, and occupation; for the things I have been speaking of are mere qualifications towards arms; and what is qualification without intention and act? Romulus, after his death (as they report or feign), sent a present to the Romans ·enjoining· that above all they should attend to arms, and then they would prove the greatest empire of the world. The fabric of the state of Sparta was wholly (though not wisely) framed and composed to that scope and end; the Persians and Macedonians had it for a very short time; the Gauls, Germans, Goths, Saxons, Normans and others had it for a ·longer· time; the Turks have it at this day, though greatly in decline. The Spaniards are in effect the only ones in Christian Europe who have it; but it is so plain, that every man profits in what he most *intends* that he need not put it into action. It is enough to *point at* it for it to be the case that no nation which does not directly profess arms can look to have greatness simply descend on them;⁸⁵; and on the

⁸⁵ [the original has 'fall into their mouths']

other side it is a most certain oracle of time that the states which continue long in that profession (as the Romans and Turks principally have done) do wonders; and those who have professed arms only for an age [meaning 'a much shorter age'] have notwithstanding commonly attained that greatness in that shorter age, which maintained them long after, when their profession and exercise of arms had grown to decay.

A state should have laws or customs that may extend to them just occasions (as may be claimed) of war; for imprinted in the nature of men there is that justice that they are not to enter upon wars (from which so many calamities ensue) except upon some at least plausible grounds and quarrels. The Turk has at hand for cause of war *the propagation of his law or sect*, a quarrel that he can always command. The Romans, though they esteemed extending the limits of their empire to be a great honour to their generals when it was done, yet they never rested upon that alone to begin a war. **(i)** First, therefore, let nations that claim to be great be sensible of wrongs, ·alleged· either against •borderers [people living on or near the borders of the state in question], •merchants, or •politic ministers [see Glossary]; and let them sit not too long upon a provocation. **(ii)** Secondly, let them be ready to rush in with aid for their confederates, as the Romans always were; it was as though the confederate had defensive leagues with various other states, was threatened with invasion, implored their aid severally, and the Romans would always be the foremost, and not allow any other to have the honour. As for the wars that were anciently made on the behalf of a kind of party or silent agreement among states, I do not see how they can be well justified: as when a state should have laws or customs that may extend to them just occasions (as may be claimed) of war; for imprinted in the nature of

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- the Romans made a war for the liberty of Græcia; or when
- the Lacedæmonians and Athenians made wars to set up or pull down democracies and oligarchies; or when
- wars were made by foreigners—under the pretence of justice or protection—to deliver the subjects of others from tyranny and oppression

and the like. Let it suffice that no state ·can· expect to be great that is not awake upon any just occasion of arming.

Nobody can be healthful without exercise, neither natural body nor politic; and certainly a just and honourable war

⁸⁶ [Writing 'nobody' as a single word is Bacon's, not an artefact of the present version.]

is the true exercise for a kingdom or state.⁸⁶ A civil war, indeed, is like the heat of a fever; but a foreign war is like the heat of exercise, and serves to keep the body in health; for in a slothful peace courages will become effeminate and manners will become corrupt. But remaining for the most part in arms unquestionably makes for greatness, whatever it may do for happiness; and the strength of a veteran army (though it be a chargeable business) always on foot, is what commonly gives the law—or at least the reputation—among all neighbour states, as may well be seen in Spain, which has had in one part or other a veteran army, almost continually, for the space of 120 years.

To be master of the sea is an abridgment of a monarchy. Cicero, writing to Atticus of Pompey's preparation against Caesar, says *Consilium Pompeii plane Themistocleum est; putat enim, qui mari potitur, eum rerum potiri* ['Pompey's plan is clearly that of Themistocles; for he believes that whoever is master of the sea will obtain the supreme power'], and without doubt Pompey would have tired Caesar out, if in vain confidence he had not left that way. We see the great effects of battles by sea. The battle of Actium decided the empire of the world: the battle of Lepanto arrested the greatness of the Turk. There are many examples where sea-fights have been final to a war; but this is when princes, or states, have set up their rest upon the battles. But this much is certain: he who commands the sea is at great liberty, and may take as much and as little of the war as he wishes; whereas those who are strongest by land are nevertheless many times in great difficulties. Surely, at this day, with us of Europe, the advantage of strength at sea (which is one of the principal dowries of this kingdom of Great Britain) is great; both **(i)** because most of the kingdoms of Europe are not merely inland but surrounded by sea for the most part of their compass; and **(ii)** because the wealth of both Indies—east and west—seems in great part to be a

mere accessory to the command of the seas.

The wars of later ages seem to be made in the dark, in comparison with the glory and honour that reflected upon men from the wars in ancient times. There are now, for martial encouragement, some degrees and orders of chivalry, which nevertheless are conferred promiscuously on soldiers and civilians; and some remembrance, perhaps, upon the escutcheon, and some hospitals for maimed soldiers, and such things; but in ancient times

- the trophies erected upon the place of the victory;
- the funeral praises and monuments for those who died in the wars;
- the personal crowns and garlands;
- the style of 'emperor', which the great kings of the world afterwards borrowed;
- the triumphs of the generals upon their return;
- the great donatives [see Glossary] and largesses upon the disbanding of the armies;

were things able to inflame all men's courage. But the power of the triumph amongst the Romans was not caused by pageants or military *show* but by one of the wisest and noblest institutions that ever was; for it contained three things:

- honour to the general,
- riches to the treasury out of the spoils, and
- donatives to the army.

But that honour, perhaps, would not be fit for monarchies unless it was in the person of the monarch himself or his sons; as it happened in the times of the Roman emperors, who •did appropriate the actual triumphs to themselves and their sons, for such wars as they did achieve in person, and •left for wars achieved by subjects only some triumphal garments and ensigns to the general.

No man can by care-taking (as the Scripture says) 'add a

cubit to his stature' [*St. Matthew* 6:27; *St. Luke* 1:25] in this little model of a man's body; but in kingdoms and commonwealths it is in the power of princes or states to add size and greatness to their kingdom; for they may sow greatness to their posterity by introducing such ordinances, constitutions and customs as I have now mentioned, but these things are commonly not observed but left to take their chance.

30. Regimen of health

There is a wisdom in this beyond the rules of physic [see Glossary]. A man's own observation—what he finds good and what he finds hurtful—is the best medicine to preserve health; but this inference:

'This does not agree well with me, therefore I will not continue it'

is safer than this:

'I find no offence in this, therefore I may use it;

for strength of nature in youth passes over many excesses the effects of which must be felt in old age.

Take notice of the coming on of years, and do not think to do the same things still; for age will not be defied. Beware of any sudden change in any great point of diet, and—if a change is necessary—adjust the rest to fit the diet; for it is a secret both in nature and state that it is safer to change many things than to change one. Examine your customs of diet, sleep, exercise, apparel, and the like; and if you judge anything to be hurtful, try to discontinue it a little at a time, but in such a way that if the change brings any inconvenience you can reverse it; for it is hard to distinguish •that which is *generally* held good and wholesome from •that which is good in your *particular* case and fit for your own body. To be free-minded and cheerfully disposed at hours

of meat, and of sleep, and of exercise, is one of the best prescriptions for a long life. As for the passions and studies of the mind, avoid

- envy,
- anxious fears,
- anger fretting inwards,
- subtle and knotty inquisitions,
- joys and exhilarations in excess,
- sadness not communicated.

Entertain hopes of

- mirth rather than joy,
- variety of delights, rather than surfeit of them,
- wonder and admiration, and therefore novelties;
- studies that fill the mind with splendid and illustrious objects, such as histories, fables, and contemplations of nature.

If in health you fly physic altogether, it will be too strange for your body when you come to need it; if you make it too familiar, it will work no extraordinary effect when sickness comes. I commend some diet for certain seasons, rather than frequent use of physic, unless it has grown into a custom; for those •intermittent• diets alter the body more •than physic• and trouble it less. If your body undergoes some striking change of constitution, do not neglect it, but ask medical opinion about it. In sickness, respect health principally; and in health •respect• action; for those who put their bodies to endure in health, may—in most sicknesses, which are not very sharp—be cured only with diet and tendering. Celsus could never have spoken it as a physician, had he not also been a wise man, when he gives it for one of the great precepts of health and longevity that a man should vary and interchange contraries, but with an inclination to the more benign extreme. Use fasting and full eating, but rather full eating; watching and sleep, but rather sleep; sitting and

exercise, but rather exercise, and the like; so shall nature be cherished, and yet taught masteries. Some physicians are so pleasing and conformable to the mood of the patient that they do not press the true cure of the disease; and some others are so regular in proceeding according to art for the disease that they do not sufficiently respect the condition of the patient. Engage a physician of a middling temper; or, if that cannot be found in one man, combine two—one of each sort; and forget not to call on the one best acquainted with your body, as well the one with the best reputation for professional skill.

31. Suspicion

Suspicious among thoughts are like bats among birds: they always fly by twilight. Certainly they should be repressed, or at least well guarded against; for they cloud the mind, they lose friends, and they check with business so that business cannot go on constantly. They bring

- kings to tyranny,
- husbands to jealousy,
- wise men to irresolution and melancholy.

They are defects not in the heart but in the brain; for they occur in the sturdiest natures, as in the example of Henry VII of England. There was not a more suspicious man, nor a more sturdy, and in such a composition they do small hurt; for commonly they are submitted only to examination whether they are likely or not; but in fearful natures they gain ground too fast. Nothing makes a man suspect much, more than to know little; and, therefore, men should remedy suspicion by coming to know more and not keeping their suspicions in smother. What would men have? Do they regard those they employ and deal with as saints? Do they

not think they will have their own ends, and be truer to themselves than to them? So there is no better way to moderate suspicions than to count on such suspicions as true, and yet to bridle them as false; to hope for the best, but be fully prepared for the worst.

A man ought to make use of suspicions by preparing for the upshot that what he suspects is true, but true in a way that does him no hurt. Suspicious that the mind of itself gathers are mere buzzes; but suspicions that are artificially nourished, and put into men's heads by the tales and whisperings of others, have stings. Certainly, the best means to clear the way in this same wood of suspicions is frankly to communicate them to the party whom he suspects; for that will surely let him know more of the truth of them than he did before; and will make that party more cautious about giving further cause of suspicion. . . .

32. Discourse

Some in their discourse desire commendation •of wit in being able to hold all arguments rather than •of judgment in discerning what is true; as if it were praiseworthy to know *what might be said* and not *what should be thought*. Some have certain commonplaces and themes, in which they speak truth but lack variety; which kind of poverty is for the most part tedious, and—when it is once perceived—ridiculous. The most honourable part of talk is to open a topic, to moderate •the discussion of it• and pass •the moderator's role• to someone else; for then a man leads the dance. It is good in discourse and speech of conversation to vary and intermingle

- speech of the present occasion with arguments,
- tales with reasons,

- asking of questions with telling of opinions, and
- jest with earnest;

for it is a dull thing to tire. . . .any thing too far. As for jesting, certain things ought to be privileged from it; namely:

- religion,
- matters of state,
- great persons,
- any man's present business of importance, and
- any case that deserves pity.

Yet some people think their wits have been asleep unless they dart out something that is piquant, and hits a tender part; that is a vein which ought to be bridled: *Parce, puer, stimulis, et fortius utere loris* ['Boy, spare the whip, and tightly grasp the reins'. Ovid].

Generally, men ought to find the difference between saltiness and bitterness. Certainly, he who has a satirical vein, as he makes others afraid of his wit, so he needs to be afraid of others' memory. He who questions much will learn much, and will give much satisfaction, especially if he applies his questions to the skill of the persons he is questioning; for he will give them occasion to please themselves in speaking, and will himself continually gather knowledge; but let his questions not be troublesome, for that is the conduct of an examiner. And let him be sure to leave other men their turn to speak. Inded, if there are any who want to reign and take up all the ·speaking· time, let him find means to silence them and let others speak. . . . If at one time you pretend to know something that you are thought to know, at another time you will be thought to know something that you do not know. Speech of a man about himself ought to be rare, and well chosen. I knew someone who was wont to say in scorn 'He must needs be a wise man; he speaks so much of himself! There is only one case where a man may commend himself with good grace, and that is in commending virtue in

someone else, especially if it is a virtue to which he himself pretends. Remarks intended to be applied to particular individuals should be sparingly used; for discourse ought to be as a field, without coming home to any man. I knew two noblemen in the west part of England, of whom **a** one was given to scoff but always kept royal cheer in his house; **b** the other would ask of those who had been at **a** the other's table 'Tell truly, was there never insult or sarcastic remark given?' To which the **b** guest would answer 'Such and such a thing happened.' The **a** lord would say 'I thought he would spoil a good dinner.'

Discretion of speech is more than eloquence; and to speak agreeably to him with whom we deal, is more than to speak in good words, or in good order. A good continued speech, without a good speech of interlocution, shows slowness; and a good reply, or second speech, without a good settled speech, shows shallowness and weakness. As we see in beasts, that those who are weakest in running are nimblest in the turn—as it is betwen the greyhound and the hare—to use too many circumstances before one comes to the matter is wearisome; to use none at all, is blunt.

33. Colonies

[Throughout this essay, 'colony' ('colonies') replaces Bacon's 'plantation(s)'.]

Colonies are amongst ancient, primitive, and heroic works. When the world was young, it begat more children; but now it is old, it begets fewer; for I may justly account new colonies to be the children of former kingdoms. I like a colony in a pure soil; that is, where people are not displanted so as to make room for others; for otherwise it is an extirpation rather than a colony. Planting of ·colonies in· countries

is like planting of woods; for you must reckon on losing almost twenty years' profit, and expect your recompense ·only· at the end; for the destruction of most colonies has been principally due to the base and hasty drawing of profit in the first years. It is true that speedy profit is not to be neglected, as long as it goes with the good of the colony, but no further. It is a shameful and unblessed thing to take the scum of people and wicked condemned men to be among your colonists; this spoils the colony, for they will always live like rogues and not fall to work, but be lazy, and do harm, and consume food and be quickly weary, and then return to their mother country to the discredit of the colony. The people you colonise with ought to be gardeners, ploughmen, labourers, smiths, carpenters, joiners, fishermen, fowlers, with some few apothecaries, surgeons, cooks, and bakers. In a country of colonies, first look about what kind of food the country yields of itself—e.g. chestnuts, walnuts, pineapples, olives, dates, plums, cherries, wild honey, and the like—and make use of them. Then consider what food or edible things there are that grow speedily and within the year, such as parsnips, carrots, turnips, onions, radish, artichokes of Jerusalem, maize, and the like. As for wheat, barley, and oats, they demand too much labour; but with peas and beans you may begin, both because they demand less labour, and because they serve for meat as well as for bread; and rice also brings a great increase, as well as being a kind of meat. Above all, the colony ought to have at the outset a store of biscuit, oatmeal, flour, meal, and the like, till bread may be had. For beasts, or birds, take chiefly such as are least subject to diseases, and multiply fastest; as swine, goats, cocks, hens, turkeys, geese, house-doves, and the like. The victuals in colonies ought to be expended almost as in a besieged town, that is, with a certain allowance ·for individual persons or families·; and let the main part

of the ground be employed to grow a common stock, to be laid in, and stored up, and then delivered out in proportion ·to people's needs·; apart from some spots of ground that particular persons will manure for their own private use.

Consider, likewise, what commodities the soil where the colony is does naturally yield, that they may some way help to defray the charge of the colony; so long as it is not, as I said, to the untimely prejudice of the main business, as it has fared with tobacco in Virginia. Timber is fit to be such a business, because there is commonly sufficient—indeed too much—timber. If there is iron ore, and streams on which to place the mills, iron is a splendid commodity where wood is plentiful. Making of bay-salt, if the climate is proper for it, would be put in experience; growing silk, likewise, if there is any, is a promising commodity; pitch and tar, where there is a store of firs and pines are, will not fail; so drugs and sweet woods, where they are, cannot but yield great profit; soap-ashes, likewise, and other things that may be thought of; but do not expend too much labour under ground, for the hope of mines is very uncertain, and tends to make the colonists lazy in other things. For government, let it be in the hands of one, assisted with some counsel; and let them have commission to exercise martial laws, with some limitation; and, above all, let men make that profit of being in the wilderness: having God and his service always before their eyes.

Let not the government of the colony depend upon too many counsellors and managers in the colonising country, but upon a moderate number; and let those be noblemen and gentlemen rather than •merchants, for •they always look for the present gain. Let there be freedoms from custom, till the colony be of strength; and not only freedom from custom, but freedom to carry their commodities where they may make their best of them, except there be some special cause

of caution. Do not cram people in, sending company after company too quickly; but attend rather to how they waste [i.e. to what their death-rate is], and send supplies proportionally; but so as the number may live well in the colony, and not be in penury through surcharges. It has been a great endangering to the health of some colonies that they have built along the sea and rivers, in marshy and unwholesome grounds; therefore, though you begin at the rivers to avoid transport-costs and other such inconveniences, build still outwards from the streams rather than along them. It similarly concerns the health of the colony, that they have a good store of salt with them, for them to use in their victuals when it shall be necessary.

If you establish a colony where savages are, do not only entertain them with trifles and geegaws. but treat them justly and graciously, though with sufficient guard. And do not win their favour by helping them to invade their enemies, but there is nothing wrong with helping them to defend themselves. Often send some of them over to the colonising country, so that they may see a better condition than their own, and commend it when they return. When the colony grows to strength, then it is time to bring women as well as men into it; so that the colony may spread into generations, and not be perpetually maintained by additions from without. It is the sinfulness thing in the world, to forsake or destitute a colony once it is established; for, besides the dishonour, it is the guiltiness of blood of many commiserable persons.

34. Riches

I cannot call riches better than the baggage of virtue; the Roman word is better, *impedimenta*; for as the baggage is to an army, so is riches to virtue; it cannot be spared nor

left behind, but it hinders the march; and indeed the care of it sometimes loses or disturbs the victory. Of great riches there is no real use, except it be in the distribution; the rest is mere conceit. So says Solomon: 'Where much is, there are many to consume it; and what has the owner, but the sight of it with his eyes?' [*Ecclesiastes* 5:11] No man's capacity for personal enjoyment stretches far enough to take in great riches: there is a custody of them, or a power of dole and donative of them, or a fame of them, but no solid use to the owner. Do you not see what feigned prices are set upon little stones and rarities? and what works of ostentation are undertaken because there might seem to be some use of great riches? But then you will say, they may be of use to buy men out of dangers or troubles; as Solomon says: 'Riches are as a strong-hold in the imagination of the rich man'; but this is excellently expressed, that it is in imagination and not always in fact; for great riches have certainly sold more men than they have bought out. Seek not proud riches, but such as thou mayest get justly, use soberly, distribute cheerfully, and leave contentedly; yet have no abstract contempt of them, as friars do, but distinguish, as Cicero says well of Rabirius Posthumus: *In studio rei amplificandæ apparebat, non avaritiæ prædam, sed instrumentum bonitati quæri* ['In his anxiety to increase his fortune, it was evident that not the gratification of avarice was sought, but the means of doing good.']. Harken also to Solomon, and beware of hastily gathering riches: *Qui festinat ad divitias, non erit insons* ['He who hastens to riches will not be without guilt.']

The poets feign that when Plutus (which is riches) is sent from Jupiter, he limps and goes slowly; but when he is sent from Pluto, he runs and is swift of foot; meaning that riches acquired by good means and just labour grow slowly; but when they come by the death of others—Pluto being the king of the realm of the dead—(as by the course of

inheritance, testaments, and the like), they come tumbling upon a man. But it might be applied likewise to Pluto, taking him for the devil; for when riches come from the devil (as by fraud and oppression, and unjust means), they come at speed. The ways to enrich are many, and most of them foul. Parsimony is one of the best, and yet it is not innocent because it withholds men from works of liberality and charity. The improvement of the ground is the most natural way of obtaining riches; for it is the blessing of our great mother, the earth. It is slow, but where men of great wealth do stoop to husbandry, it multiplies riches exceedingly. I knew a nobleman, in England, that had the greatest certified wealth of any man in my time, a great grazier, a great sheep-master, a great timber-man, a great collier, a great corn-master, a great lead-man, and so of iron and a number of the like points of husbandry, that the earth seemed to him a sea in respect of the perpetual importation. It was truly observed by someone that 'himself came very hardly to a little riches, and very easily to great riches', for when a man's stock is come to that [i.e. has reached the 'little riches' level], he can

- wait for the market prices to fall,
- overcome those bargains that are available to few men because of how much money they involve, and
- be partner in the industries of younger men,

he cannot but increase mainly. The gains of ordinary trades and vocations are honest, and furthered by two things, chiefly: by diligence, and by a good name for good and fair dealing; whereas the gains of bargains are of a more doubtful nature, when men

- wait upon others' necessity,
- cause the others to be broken by servants and instruments to draw them on,
- cunningly deprive the others of their best customers, and the like practices, which are crafty and wicked. As for

the chopping of bargains, when a man buys not to hold but to sell over again, that commonly grinds double, both upon the seller and upon the buyer. Sharings do greatly enrich, if the hands are well chosen that are trusted. Usury is the most certain means of gain, though one of the worst; as that whereby a man does eat his bread *in sudore vultus alieni* ['in the sweat of someone else's brow'] and, besides, does plough upon Sundays; but yet certain though it be, it has flaws, because the clerks and brokers value unsound men to serve their own turn. The good luck of being the first in an invention or in a privilege does sometimes cause a wonderful overgrowth in riches, as it was with the first man to plant sugar in the Canaries; therefore, if a man can play the true logician, having judgment as well as invention, he may do great matters, especially if the times are fit. He who relies on certain gains will hardly grow to great riches; and he who puts all upon adventures, often breaks and comes to poverty; so it is good to guard adventures with certainties that may uphold losses. Monopolies, and hoarding wares for resale, are great means to enrich where they are not restrained; especially if the party has information about what things are likely to come into request, and so store himself beforehand. Riches acquired through service, though it be of the best rise, yet when they are acquired by flattery, feeding humours, and other servile conditions, they may be placed amongst the worst. As for fishing for testaments and executorships (as Tacitus says of Seneca, *Testamenta et orbos tanquam indagine capi* ['Wills and childless persons were caught by him, as though with a hunting-net'], it is yet worse, by how much men submit themselves to meaner [see Glossary] persons than they would be submitted to in service.

Do not give much belief to those who seem to despise riches, for they despise those who despair of having riches. and their attitude does not change when they come to have

riches. Be not penny-wise; riches have wings, and sometimes they fly away of themselves, sometimes they must be set flying to bring in more. Men leave their riches either to their kindred, or to the public; and moderate portions prosper best in both. A great estate left to an heir is like a lure to all the birds of prey round about to seize on him, if he is not better stablished in years and judgment. Similarly, glorious gifts and foundations are like sacrifices without salt, and like the painted sepulchres of alms which soon will putrefy and corrupt inwardly. So do not measure your advancements by quantity, but assess them by measure. And do not defer charities till death; for in such a deferment you are—if a man weighs it rightly—being liberal with someone else's fortune rather than with your own.

35. Prophecies

Seneca the tragedian has these verses:

*Venient annis
Sæcula seris, quibus Oceanus
Vincula rerum laxet, et ingens
Pateat Tellus, Tiphysque novos
Detegat orbis; nec sit terris
Ultima Thule.*

A prophecy of the discovery of the American empire.⁸⁷

The daughter of Polycrates dreamed that a Jupiter bathed her father, and b Apollo anointed him; and it came to pass that he was crucified in an open place, where b the sun made his body run with sweat, and a the rain washed it.

Philip of Macedon dreamed that he sealed up his wife's belly, which he took to mean that his wife would be barren; but Aristander the soothsayer told him his wife was with child, because men do not customarily seal vessels that are empty.

A phantasm that appeared to Marcus Brutus in his tent said to him *Philippis iterum me videbis* [You shall see me again at Phillipi.]

Tiberius said to Galba *Tu quoque, Galba, degustabis imperium* [Even you, Galba, will have a taste of empire.]

In Vespasian's time a prophecy arose in the East that those who should come forth from Judea should reign over the world; which *may* have been meant of our Saviour; but Tacitus expounds it as applying to Vespasian.

The night before he was slain Domitian dreamed that a golden head was growing out of the nape of his neck; and indeed the succession that followed him for many years made golden times.

Henry VI of England said of Henry VII when he was a lad and was giving him water, 'This is the lad that shall enjoy the crown for which I strive.'

When I was in France, I heard from one Dr. Pena that the queen mother⁸⁸ who was given to curious arts, caused the king her husband's nativity to be calculated under a false name; and the astrologer gave a judgment that he would be killed in a duel; at which the queen laughed, thinking her husband to be above challenges and duels; but he was slain in a tilting exercise, splinters of Montgomery's spear going in at the lower part of his helmet.

The trivial prophecy which I heard when I was a child and Queen Elizabeth was in the flower of her years was

⁸⁷ [After the lapse of years, ages will come in which Ocean shall relax his chains around the world, and a vast continent shall appear, and Tiphys shall explore new regions, and Thule shall be no longer the utmost verge of earth.]

⁸⁸ [Catherine de Medicis, the wife of Henry II of France, who died from a wound accidentally received in a tournament.]

When hempe is spunne, England's done, which was generally taken to mean that after the princes Henry, Edward, Mary, Philip, and Elizabeth had reigned—their initial letters making the word ‘hempe’—England would come to utter confusion; which, thanks be to God, is verified only in the change of the name; because the king’s style is now no more ‘of England’ but ‘of Britain’.

There was also another prophecy before the year of ’88, which I do not well understand:

There shall be seen upon a day,
Between the Baugh and the May,
The black fleet of Norway.
When that that is come and gone,
England build houses of lime and stone,
For after wars you shall have none.

It was generally conceived to be meant of the Spanish fleet that came in ’88, because the king of Spain’s surname (as they call it), is Norway. The prediction of Regiomontanus *Octogesimus octavus mirabilis annus* [‘The 88th will be a wonderful year’] was likewise thought to be accomplished in the sending of that great fleet, being the greatest in strength, though not in number, of all that ever swam upon the sea.

As for Cleon’s dream, I think it was a joke. He dreamed that he was devoured by a long dragon; and this was applied to a maker of sausages who was exceedingly troubled by it. There are numbers of prophecies of that sort—especially if you include dreams and the predictions of astrology—but I have set down these few. . . . as examples.⁸⁹ My judgment is, that they ought all •to be despised, and •to serve only for winter talk by the fireside; though when I say ‘despised’ I mean this as regards *believing* them; for otherwise *spreading* or *publishing* them is in no way to be despised, for they have

done much mischief [see Glossary]; and I see many severe laws made to suppress them. They have acquired grace and some credit because of hree things.

(1) Men mark when they hit, and never mark when they miss; as they also do generally of dreams.

(2) Probable conjectures or obscure traditions often turn themselves into prophecies; while the nature of man. . . .thinks it no peril to *foretell* that which indeed they merely *collect*, as with Seneca’s verse; for so much was then—at his time—subject to demonstration, that the globe of the earth had great parts beyond the Atlantic, which it was probable to think was not all sea; and adding to this the tradition in Plato’s *Timæus*, and his *Atlanticus*, it might encourage one to turn it into a prediction.

(3) The third and last (which is the great one), is, that almost all of them, being infinite in number, have been impostures, merely contrived and feigned by idle and crafty brains after the event was past.

36. Ambition

Ambition is like choler, which is a humour [see Glossary] that makes men active, earnest, full of alacrity, and stirring, if it be not stopped. But if it *is* stopped and cannot have its way, it becomes hot and fiery and thereby malign and venomous. So ambitious men, if they find the way open for their rising and still get forward, they are busy rather than dangerous; but if they are checked in their desires they become secretly discontent, look upon men and matters with an evil eye, and are best pleased when things go backward; which is the worst property in a servant of a prince or state. Therefore, it is good for princes, if they use ambitious men, to handle

⁸⁹ [The ellipsis replaces ‘of certain credit’. It’s not clear what Bacon can have meant by this, given how he goes on.]

things so that they are still progressive and not retrograde. And because this cannot be without inconvenience, it is good not to use such ambitious natures at all; for if they do not rise with their service, they will set about making their service fall with them. But since I have said it would be good not to employ men of ambitious natures except when it is necessary, I should say something about what the cases are in which they are of necessity. Good commanders in the wars must be taken into service, be they never so ambitious; for the use of their service dispenses with the rest; and to take a soldier without ambition is to pull off his spurs. There is also great use for ambitious men as screens to princes in matters of danger and envy; for no man will take that part unless he is like a blindfolded dove, which mounts and mounts, because he cannot see about him. There is use for ambitious men also in pulling down the greatness of any subject who has risen too high, as Tiberius used Macro in pulling down Sejanus. Since, therefore, they must be used in such cases, it remains to say something about how they are to be bridled, so as to make them less dangerous. There is less danger from them if they are of mean birth than if they are noble; and if they are harsh of nature rather than gracious and popular; and if they are new-raised rather than grown cunning and fortified in their greatness.

It is counted by some a weakness in princes to have favourites; but this is the best remedy of all against ambitious great ones; for when the way of pleasuring and displeasuring lies by the favourite, it is impossible any other should be over-great. Another means to curb them is to balance them by others as proud as they; but then there must be some middle counsellors to keep things steady, for without that ballast the ship will roll too much. At the least, a prince may animate and accustom some meaner persons to be, as it were, scourges to ambitious men. As

for having them liable to ruin, if they are of fearful natures, it may do well; but if they are stout and daring, this may forward their designs and prove dangerous. As for pulling them down, if the affairs require it and it cannot safely be done suddenly, the only way is by a continual interchange of favours and disgraces, whereby they may not know what to expect and will be at a loss. It is less harmful for ambition to prevail in great things than it is for it to appear in every thing; for that breeds confusion and mars business. . . . He who seeks to be eminent amongst able men has a great task, but that is always good for the public; whereas he who plots to be the only figure amongst ciphers is the decay of a whole age.

Honour has three things in it: •the vantage-ground to do good; •the approach to kings and principal persons; and •the raising of a man's own fortunes. He who has the best of these intentions when he aspires is an honest man; and it is a wise prince who can discern which of these intentions an aspirant has. Generally, let princes and states choose ministers [see Glossary] who are more sensible of duty than of rising, and whose love of business rests upon conscience [see Glossary] rather than upon ostentation; and let them discern a busy nature from a willing mind.

37. Masques and triumphs

These things are but toys to come amongst such serious observations; but yet, since princes will have such things, it is better they should be graced with elegance, than daubed with cost. Dancing to song is a thing of great state and pleasure. I understand it that the song be in choir, placed aloft, and accompanied with some broken music [i.e. with the notes of each chord played successively], and the ditty fitted to

the occasion. Acting in song, especially in dialogues, has an extreme good grace; I say acting, not dancing (for that is a mean [see Glossary] and vulgar thing); and the voices of the dialogue would be strong and manly (a base and a tenor, no treble), and the ditty high and tragical, not nice or dainty. Several choirs, placed one over against another, and taking the voices by catches anthem-wise, give great pleasure. Turning dances into figure is a childish curiosity; and, generally, let it be noted that the things I here set down are ones that naturally take the senses, and do not evoke petty wonderments. The alterations of scenes, as long as they happen quietly, are things of great beauty and pleasure: for they feed and relieve the eye before it becomes full of the same object. Let the scenes abound with light, specially coloured and varied; and let the masquers—or any others that are to come down from the scene—have some motions upon the scene itself before their coming down; for it attracts the eye strangely, and makes it with great pleasure desire to see what it cannot perfectly discern. Let the songs be loud and cheerful, and not like the chirpings of young birds. . . .

[Bacon continues with about a page of further requirements for

- masques: costumes, colours, sounds, the place of comic episodes, the respective roles of hired performers and ladies and gentlemen, and so on

and also for

- jousts and tourneys: quality of horses and armour, etc.

until he ends the essay with a backward sweep of his hand:] But enough of these toys.

38. Nature in men.

Nature is often hidden, sometimes overcome, seldom extinguished. Force makes nature more violent in the return; doctrine and discourse make nature less importune [see

Glossary], but only custom alters and subdues nature. He that seeketh victory over his nature, let him not set himself too great or too small tasks; for the first will make him dejected by frequent failures, and the second will make him a small proceeder, though by frequent ·very small· successes. And at the first, let him practise with helps, as swimmers do with bladders, or rushes; but, after a time, let him practise with disadvantages, as dancers do with thick shoes; for it breeds great perfection if the practice is harder than the use. Where nature is mighty, and therefore the victory hard, the degrees need be **(1)** first, to stay and arrest nature in time, like someone who would say over the four and twenty letters ·to calm himself· when he was angry; then **(2)** less in quantity, like someone who wants to give up wine and does this by going from drinking ·many· healths to a ·single· draught at a meal; and **(3)** to discontinue altogether. But if a man has the fortitude and resolution to free himself at once, that is the best: *Optimus ille animi vindex lædentia pectus Vincula qui rupit, dedoluitque semel.* [‘He is the best asserter of the liberty of his mind, who bursts the chains that gall his breast, and at the same moment ceases to grieve.’ (From Ovid, *Remedy of Love*). Nor is there anything wrong with the ancient rule to bend nature—like a wand—to a contrary extreme, thereby setting it right; assuming that the contrary extreme is no vice.

Let not a man force a habit upon himself by a perpetual continuance though with **some ·random·** intermission. ·There are two reasons for this.· •The pause reinforces the new onset. And •if a man who is not perfect is ever in practice, he shall practise his errors as well as his abilities, and induce one habit of both; and the only way to avoid this is by **seasonable** intermissions.

But let not a man trust his victory over his nature too far; for nature will lie buried a great time, and yet revive upon the

occasion or temptation, as it was with Æsop's damsel who turned from a cat to a woman and sat very demurely at the end of the table till a mouse ran before her. Therefore, let a man either •avoid the •tempting• occasion altogether or •put himself into it *often*, so that he will not be much tempted by it.

A man's nature is best perceived in private, for there is no affectation •in private•; for in passion privacy puts a man out of his precepts, and in a new case or experiment custom leaves him. They are happy men whose natures agree with their vocations; otherwise they may say *Multum incola fuit anima mea* ['My soul has been resting for a long time'] when they have to do with things that they have no feelings about. In studies, whatever a man commands himself to do, let him set hours for it: but for anything that is agreeable to his nature—as distinct from what he must *command himself* to do, let him not take care for any set times; for his thoughts will fly to it of themselves, so that the spaces of other business or studies will suffice. A man's nature runs either to herbs or weeds; therefore, let him seasonably water the one and destroy the other.

39. Custom and education.

Men's thoughts are much according to their inclination, their discourse and speeches according to their learning and acquired opinions, but their deeds follow what they are accustomed to; and therefore—as Machiavelli well notes (though with an evil-favoured example)—there is no trusting to the force of nature or to the showiness of words unless it is corroborated by custom. His example is this: for achieving

a desperate conspiracy, a man should not rely on the fierceness of any man's nature, or his resolute undertakings, but should take one who has had his hands formerly in blood. But Machiavelli knew not of a Friar Clement, or a Ravallac, or a Jaureguy, or a Baltazar Gerard;⁹⁰ yet his rule holds still, that neither nature nor the engagement of words is as forcible as custom is. Only superstition is now so well advanced that men of the first blood are as firm as butchers by occupation; and votary resolution⁹¹ is made equivalent in power to custom, even in matters of blood. In other things, the predominancy of custom is everywhere visible, so that it is wonderful to hear men profess, protest, engage, give great words, and then do just as they have done before, as if they were dead. . . . engines moved only by the wheels of custom. We see also the reign or tyranny of custom, what it is.

The Hindus (I mean the sect of their wise men) lay themselves quietly upon a stack of wood, and so sacrifice themselves by fire; indeed, the wives try to be burned with the corpses of their husbands. The lads of ancient Sparta were wont to be scourged upon the altar of Diana, without so much as flinching. I remember, at the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's time of England, a condemned Irish rebel put up a petition to the deputy that he might be hanged in a withe [= a wicker-work basket], and not in a halter, because former rebels had been hanged in that way. There are monks in Russia who for penance will sit a whole night in a vessel of water, till they are encased in hard ice. Many examples can be given of the force of custom upon both mind and body. Therefore, since custom is the principal magistrate of man's life, let men try by all means to acquire good customs. Certainly, custom is most perfect when it begins in young years: we call this 'education', which is in effect just an

⁹⁰ [Each of these four men •tried to kill (or succeeded in killing) some royal prince, yet •lived an unbloody life until then.]

⁹¹ [That is, a resolution formally backed by devotion to some principle.]

early custom. So we see that in youth the tongue (in all languages) is more pliant to all expressions and sounds; and the joints are more supple to all feats of activity and motions in youth, than afterwards; for it is true, that late learners cannot so well take the ply, except in the exceedingly rare cases of minds that have not allowed themselves to fix, but have kept themselves open and prepared to receive continual amendment. But if the force of **simple and separate** custom is great, the force of custom that is **copulate and conjoined and collegiate** is far greater; for there example teaches, company comforts, emulation quickens, glory raises. . . . Certainly, the great multiplication of virtues in human nature rests upon societies well ordained and disciplined; for commonwealths and good governments do nourish virtue grown, but do not much mend the seeds. The misery is that the most effective means are now applied to the least desirable ends.

40. Fortune

It cannot be denied that outward accidents conduce much to fortune. Favour, opportunity, death of others, occasion fitting virtue; but above all the *shape* of a man's fortune is in his own hands: *Faber quisque fortunæ suæ* says the poet; and the most frequent of external causes is that the folly of one man is the fortune of another; for no man prospers so suddenly as by others' errors. *Serpens nisi serpentem comederit non fit draco* ['A serpent does not become a dragon unless it eats a serpent.'] Overt and apparent virtues bring forth praise; but there are secret and hidden virtues that bring forth fortune; certain deliveries of a man's self that have no name. The Spanish name *disemboltura* partly expresses them in the case where there are no blockages or restiveness in a man's nature, and the wheels of his mind keep way with the

wheels of his fortune; for that is how Livy

after describing Cato Major in these words *In illo viro, tantum robur corporis et animi fuit, ut quocunque loco natus esset, fortunam sibi facturus videretur* ['In that man there was such great strength of body and mind that he seemed sure to make his fortune, whatever station he had been born into']

reaches the conclusion that Cato had *versatile ingenium* [= 'a versatile mind']; so if a man looks sharply and attentively he will see Fortune; for though she is blind, she is not invisible. The way of Fortune is like the milky way in the sky; which is a meeting or knot of a number of small stars, not seen separately but giving light together; so are there a number of little and scarce discerned virtues, or rather faculties and customs, that make men fortunate. The Italians note some of them, such as a man would little think of. When they speak of someone who cannot go wrong, they will throw in with his other conditions that he has *Poco di matto* [= 'a little of the fool']; and there are certainly not two more fortunate properties to have than •a little of the fool and •not too much of the honest; therefore, extreme lovers of their country, or masters, have never been fortunate; neither *can* they be, for when a man places his thoughts outside himself he does not go his own way. A hasty fortune makes an enterpriser and remover (the French has it better, *entreprenant* or *remuant*ⁿ); but the exercised fortune makes the able man. Fortune is to be honoured and respected, if only for her daughters, Confidence and Reputation; for Felicity breeds those two—the first within a man's self, the latter in others towards him. All wise men, to reduce the envy of their own virtues, commonly ascribe them to Providence and Fortune; for so they may the better assume them, and also it is greatness in a man to be the care of the higher powers. So Cæsar said to the pilot in the tempest, *Cæsarem*

portas, et fortunam ejus [‘You are carrying Caesar, and his fortune.’] So Sylla chose the name of *Felix* [‘the fortunate’], and not of *Magnus* [‘the great’]; and it has been noted that those who ascribe openly too much to their own wisdom and policy, end by being unfortunate. It is written that Timotheus the Athenian, in his official account of his government, often interlaced his speech with ‘and in this Fortune had no part’, but never prospered in any thing he undertook afterwards. Certainly there are people whose fortunes are like Homer’s verses that have a fluency and easiness more than the verses of other poets; as Plutarch says of Timoleon’s fortune in comparison with that of Agesilaus or Epaminondas; and there can be no doubt that the source of this is much in a man’s self.

41. Usury

Many have made witty invectives against usury. They say that it is pity the devil should have God’s part, which is the tithe; that the usurer is the greatest Sabbath-breaker, because his plough goes every Sunday; that the usurer is the drone that Virgil speaks of: *Ignavum fucos pecus a præsepibus arcent* [‘Drive from their hives the drones, a lazy race’]; that the usurer breaks the first law that was made for mankind after the Fall, which was *in sudore vultus tui comedes panem tuum* [‘In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat thy bread’ (*Genesis* 3:19)] and not *in sudore vultus alieni* [‘In the sweat of someone else’s face’]; that usurers should have orange-tawny bonnets, because they do Judaize; that it is against nature for money to beget money, and the like.

I say this only, that usury is a *concessum propter duritiam cordis* [‘A concession by reason of hardness of heart’ (see *Matthew* 19:8)]

for, since there must be borrowing and lending, and men are so hard of heart that they will not lend freely, usury must be permitted. Some others have made suspicious and cunning propositions of banks, discovery of men’s estates, and other inventions; but few have spoken of usury usefully. It is good to set before us the disadvantages and advantages of usury, so that the good may be either weighed out or culled out, and warily to provide that while we make our way to what is better we do not meet with what is worse.

The disadvantages of usury are these: **(1)** It makes fewer merchants; for were it not for this lazy trade of usury, money would not lie still, but would mostly be employed upon merchandising, which is the *vena porta*⁹² of wealth in a state. **(2)** It makes poor merchants; for just as a farmer cannot husband his ground so well if he holds it at a great rent, so the merchant cannot drive his trade so well if he holds it at great usury. **(3)** (resulting from the other two): the decay of customs of kings or states, which ebb or flow with merchandising. **(4)** Usury brings the treasure of a realm or state into a few hands; for the usurer being at certainties and others at uncertainties, at the end of the game most of the money will be in the box, and always a state flourishes more when wealth is more equally spread. **(5)** It beats down the price of land; for the employment of money is chiefly either merchandising or purchasing, and usury waylays both. **(6)** Usury does dull and damp all industries, improvements, and new inventions, in which money would be stirring if it were not for this slug. **(7)** It is the canker and ruin of many men’s estates, which in the course of time breeds a public poverty.

On the other side, the advantages of usury are these: **(1)** Although usury in some ways hinders merchandising, in some others it advances it; for it is certain that the greatest

⁹² [See note to Essay 19.]

part of trade is driven by young merchants on the basis of borrowing at interest; so that if the usurer either calls in or keeps back his money, there will quickly ensue a great stoppage of trade. **(2)** If it were it not for this easy borrowing upon interest, men's necessities would draw upon them a most sudden undoing, so that they would be forced to sell their means (be it lands or goods) far under foot; and so, whereas usury merely gnaws upon them, bad markets would completely swallow them up. Mortgaging or pawning will do little to mend the matter; for either men will not take pawns without use, or if they do they will look precisely for the forfeiture. I remember a cruel moneyed man in the country who would say 'The devil take this usury; it keeps us from forfeitures of mortgages and bonds.' **(3)** It is a vanity to conceive that there would be ordinary borrowing without profit; and it is impossible to conceive the number of inconveniences that will ensue if borrowing is cramped. Therefore, to speak of the abolishing of usury is idle; all states have always had it in one form or another. . . .

To speak now of the reformation and regulation of usury, how the disadvantages of it may be best avoided and the advantages retained. In the balance of advantages and disadvantages of usury, two things have to be reconciled: **(i)** the tooth of usury must be blunted, so that it does not bite too much; and **(ii)** there must be left open a means to invite moneyed men to lend to the merchants, for the continuing and quickening of trade. This cannot be done unless you introduce two different sorts of usury, a lesser and a greater; for if you reduce usury to one low rate, that will make things easier for the common borrower, but the merchant will have to seek for money; and it is to be noted that the trade of merchandising, being the most lucrative, can bear usury at a high rate; other contracts not so.

To serve both intentions, the way would be briefly this:

that there be two rates of usury—•one free and general for all, •the other under license only to certain persons and in certain places of merchandising. First, therefore, let usury in general be reduced to 5%, and let that rate be proclaimed to be free and current; and let the state shut itself out to take any penalty for the same. This will preserve borrowing from any general stop or dryness; this will ease infinite borrowers in the country; it will in good part raise the price of land, because land purchased at 16 years' purchase will yield 6% and somewhat more, whereas this 'general' rate of interest yields only 5%. This, by like reason, will encourage and sharpen industrious and profitable improvements, because many people will prefer a venture of that kind to taking 5%, especially when they have been used to greater profit. Secondly, let there be certain persons who are licensed to lend to known merchants upon usury, at a higher rate, and let it be with the following cautions: Let the rate be—even for the merchant himself—somewhat more easy than what he used formerly to pay; for by that means all borrowers—merchants or whoever—shall have some ease through this reformation. Let it not involve any bank or common stock, but let every man be master of his own money. Not that I altogether dislike banks, but certain suspicions make them hard to tolerate. Let the state be paid some small sum for the license, and the rest left to the lender; for if the abatement is small, it will not discourage the lender; because (for example) he who previously took 10% or 9% would rather descend to 8% than give over his trade of usury, thereby going from certain gains to gains of hazard. Let these licensed lenders be in number indefinite, but restrained to certain principal cities and towns of merchandising; for then they will be hardly able to colour other men's moneys in the country, so that the license of nine will not suck away the current rate of five; for no man will send his moneys far off, or put them

into unknown hands.

If it be objected, that this does in a wayt authorize usury, which before was in some places merely permissive; the answer is, that it is better to mitigate usury by declaration, than to suffer it to rage by connivance [see Glossary].

42. Youth and age

A man that is young in years may be old in hours, if he has lost no time; though that happens rarely. Generally, youth is like the first cogitations, not as wise as the second; for there is a youth in thoughts as well as in ages; and yet young men's invention is more lively than of old men's, and imaginations stream into their minds better and (as it were) more divinely. Natures that have much heat, and great and violent desires and perturbations, are not ripe for action till they have passed the middle point of their years: as it was with Julius Cæsar and Septimius Severus; of the latter of whom it is said *Juventutem egit erroribus, imo furoribus plenam* [He passed his youth full of errors, of madness even.]; and yet he was nearly the ablest emperor of all the list. But reposed natures may do well in youth, as it is seen in Augustus Cæsar, Cosmus Duke of Florence, Gaston de Foix, and others. On the other side, heat and vivacity in age is an excellent composition for business. Young men are fitter to invent than to judge, fitter for execution than for counsel, and fitter for new projects than for settled business. That is because the experience of age, in things that fall within its range, directs them, but in new things it abuses them. The errors of young men are the ruin of business; but the errors of aged men amount only to this, that more might have been done, or done sooner.

Young men, in the conduct and management of actions,

put their arms around more than they can hold, stir more than they can quiet, fly to the end, without consideration of the means and degrees, pursue some few principles which they have chanced upon absurdly [here = with no appeal to reason], care not to innovate (because innovation has unpredictable drawbacks), use extreme remedies at first, and—like an unready horse that will neither stop nor turn—doubles all their errors by refusing to acknowledge or retract them. Men of age object too much, consult too long, adventure too little, repent too soon, and seldom drive business home to the full period, but content themselves with a mediocrity of success. Certainly, it is good to compound employments of both ·ages·, for that will be good for the present, because the virtues of either age may correct the defects of both; and good for succession, that young men may be learners, while men in age are actors; and, lastly, good for events caused from outside the community, because authority follows old men, and favour and popularity follow youth; but, for the **moral** part, perhaps, youth will have the pre-eminence, as age has for the **politic** part. A certain rabbin, commenting on the text 'Your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.' infers ·from it· that young men are admitted nearer to God than old, because vision is a clearer revelation than a dream; and, certainly, the more a man drinks of the world, the more it intoxicates; and age does profit rather in the powers of understanding than in the virtues of the will and affections. Some people have an over-early ripeness in their years, which fades quickly; these are, first, such as have brittle wits, the edge whereof is soon turned; such as was the rhetorician Hermogenes, whose books are exceedingly subtle but who later became stupid. A second sort is of those who have some natural dispositions which have better grace in youth than in age; for example, a fluent and luxuriant speech, which becomes youth well, but

not age; so Tully says of Hortensius: *Idem manebat, neque idem decebat* [The close was not equal to the beginning.] The third is of those who take too high a strain at the first, and are more magnanimous than the passage of years can uphold; as was Scipio Africanus, of whom Livy says in effect *Ultima primis cedebant* [The close was unequal to the beginning].

43. Beauty

Virtue is like a rich stone, best plain set; and surely virtue is best in a body that is comely, though not of delicate features, and that has dignity of presence rather than beauty of aspect. Very beautiful persons are usually not highly virtuous, as though nature's aim were to avoid errors rather than to produce excellency; so they prove to be accomplished but not of great spirit, and care more about behaviour than about virtue. But this does not hold always; for Augustus Cæsar, Titus Vespasianus, Philip le Bel of France, Edward IV of England, Alcibiades of Athens, Ismael the Sophy of Persia, were all high and great spirits, and yet the most beautiful men of their times. In beauty, that of features is more than beauty of colour; and that of decent and gracious motion is more than that of features. That is the best part of beauty, which a picture cannot express; no, nor the first sight of the life. There is no excellent beauty that has not some strangeness in the proportion. A man cannot tell whether Apelles, or Albert Durer, were the more trifler; one of them would make a personage by geometrical proportions, the other by taking the best parts out of various faces to make one excellent face.

Such personages, I think, would please nobody but the painter that made them: A painter may make a lovely face;

but he must do it by a kind of *felicity* (as a musician who makes an excellent air), and not by *rule*. A man shall see faces in which, if you examine them part by part, you shall find never a good part, and yet the parts altogether do well. If it is true that the principal part of beauty is in decent motion, certainly it is no marvel, though persons in years seem many times more amiable *Pulchrorum autumnus pulcher* [The autumn of the beautiful is beautiful.] For no youth can be comely except by making allowances, considering his youth as making up the comeliness. Beauty is as summer fruits, which are easy to corrupt, and cannot last; and for the most part beauty makes a dissolute youth, and an age a little out of countenance; but yet certainly again, if beauty lands properly it makes virtues shine and vices blush.

44. Deformity

Deformed [see Glossary] persons are commonly even with nature; for, as nature has done ill by them, so do they by nature, being for the most part (as the Scripture says) 'void of natural affection' [*Romans 1:31, 2 Tim 3:3,*] and so they have their revenge on nature. Certainly, there is a consent between the body and the mind: *Ubi peccat in uno, periclitatur in altero*. [Where she (= nature) errs in the one, she ventures in the other.] But because there is in man a freedom of choice that shows up in his mental states, and strict causal necessity that governs what happens in his body⁹³ the stars of natural inclination are sometimes obscured by the sun of discipline and virtue. So it is good to consider deformity not as a sign which is more deceivable but as a cause which seldom fails of the effect. Anyone who has any thing fixed in his person that does induce contempt has also a perpetual spur in himself to

⁹³ [The original: 'an election touching the frame of his mind, and a necessity in the frame of his body']

rescue and deliver himself from scorn; therefore, all deformed persons are extremely bold; first in their own defence as being exposed to scorn, but then in the course of time by a general habit. Also, it stirs them to industry, especially in watching and observing the weakness of others, so that they may have something to repay. Again, in their **superiors**, it quenches jealousy towards them, as persons they think they may at pleasure despise; and it lays their **competitors and emulators** asleep, as never believing that deformed people had any possibility of advancement till they see them actually advancing; so that upon the matter, in a great wit, deformity is an advantage to rising. Kings in ancient times (and at this present in some countries) were wont to put great trust in eunuchs, because those who are envious towards *all* are more obnoxious and officious towards *one*; but yet their trust towards them has been as to good spies and good whisperers rather than good magistrates and officers; and the thinking of deformed persons is much like that. But if they are of spirit, they can seek to free themselves from scorn, which must be done either by virtue or by malice; and therefore let it not be marvelled if sometimes they prove to be excellent persons; as was Agesilaus, Zanger, the son of Solymán the magnificent, AEsop, Gasca president of Peru; with others among whom Socrates may be included.

45. Building

Houses are built to live in, and not to look on; therefore, let use be preferred before uniformity, except where both may be had. Leave the goodly fabrics of houses for beauty only to the enchanted palaces of the poets, who build them at small cost! He who builds a fair [see Glossary] house in a bad location commits himself to prison; and I do not count a

site as bad only if its air is unwholesome, but also if its air is unequal. You will often see a fine site set upon a knoll of ground with higher hills all around it, whereby the heat of the sun is trapped, and the wind gathers as in troughs; so that you will have, *suddenly*, as much diversity of heat and cold as if you lived in several places. Neither is it only bad air that makes a site bad. That can also be the result of bad roads, bad markets, and—if you will consult with Momus (God of mirth)—bad neighbours. I could go on about many more: lack of water, lack of wood, shade, and shelter, lack of fruitfulness, and a mixture of bad-making features of different natures: lack of views, lack of level grounds, lack of places not too far away for sports of hunting, hawking, and races; too near the sea, too far from it, having the convenience of navigable rivers, or the inconvenience of their overflowing; too far off from great cities, which may hinder business; or too near them, which eats up all provisions and makes every thing dear; where a man has a great living laid together, and where he is scanted; all which, as it is impossible perhaps to find together, so it is good to know them, and think of them, so that a man may take as many as he can; and if he has several dwellings, he can sort them out so that what he lacks in one he may find in another. When Pompey saw Lucullus's stately galleries and rooms so large and lightsome in one of his houses, he said 'Surely, an excellent place for summer, but how do you manage in winter?'; Lucullus answered well: 'Why, do you not think me as wise as some birds are, that ever change their abode towards the winter?'

To pass from the seat to the house itself, I will do as Cicero does in the orator's art, who writes books *De Oratore* and a book he entitles *Orator*; whereof the former deliver the precepts of the art, and the latter the perfection of it. I will therefore describe a princely palace, making a brief

model of it. ·Why only a model, rather than an actual full-sized palace?· Because now in Europe, strangely, such huge buildings as the Vatican and Escorial and some others have scarce a very fair [see Glossary] room in them.

First, therefore, I say that you cannot have a perfect palace unless you have two several sides; a side for the banquet, as is spoken of in the book of *Esther* and a side for the household; the one for feasts and triumphs, and the other for dwelling. [Bacon now specifies in great detail his preferences for the design of palaces. The level of detail makes these pages grindingly difficult for the contemporary reader or editor, while also robbing them of most of their interest. They are therefore omitted from this version. Here is a sample from them, just to show the flavour.] Before you come to the front, three courts: a green court plain, with a wall about it; a second court of the same, but more garnished with little turrets, or rather embellishments, upon the wall; and a third court, to make a square with the front, but not to be built, nor yet enclosed with a naked wall, but enclosed with terraces leaded aloft, and fairly garnished on the three sides, and cloistered on the inside with pillars, and not with arches below.

46. 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 it will always appear that when ages grow to civility and elegance, men will come to stately building sooner than to fine gardening, as though gardening were the greater perfection. I do hold that in the royal ordering of gardens there ought to be gardens for all the months in the year, corresponding to which things of beauty

are in season at each time. For December, January, and the latter part of November, you must take such things as are green all winter: holly, ivy, bays, juniper, cypress-trees, yew, pine trees, fir-trees, rosemary, lavender; periwinkle (white, purple and blue); germander, flags, orange-trees, lemon-trees, and myrtles (if they are kept warm in a greenhouse) and sweet marjoram, warm set. There follows, for the latter part of January and February, the mezereon-tree, which blossoms at that time; crocus vernus, both the yellow and the gray; primroses, anemones, the early tulip, the hyacinthus orientalis, chamairis 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 kinds; rosemary flowers, the tulip, the double peony, the pale daffodil, the French honeysuckle, the cherry-tree in blossom, the damson, 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, currants, figs in fruit, raspberries, vine-flowers, lavender in flowers, the sweet satyrian with the white flower; herba muscaria, liliium 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, early apples, codlins. In August come plums of all sorts in fruit, pears, apricots, barberries, filberts, musk-melons, monks-hoods of all colours. In September come grapes, apples, poppies of all colours, peaches, melocotones [a kind of quince], nectarines, cornelians, wardens [large pears], quinces. In October and the beginning of November, come services,

medlars, bullaces, roses pruned to flower late, hollyoaks, and such like. These details are for the climate of London; but my meaning is perceived—that you may have such a *ver perpetuum* ['perpetual spring'] as the place allows.

And because the breath of flowers is far sweeter in the air (where it comes and goes, like the warbling of music), than in the hand, therefore nothing is more fit for that delight, than to know what are the flowers and plants that do best perfume the air. Roses (damask and red) are flowers that do not send forth their aroma at any distance, so that you may walk by a whole row of them and find nothing of their sweetness, even if it is in a morning's dew. Bays, likewise, yield no smell as they grow, rosemary little, nor sweet marjoram. That which above all others yields the sweetest smell in the air is the violet, especially the white double violet, which comes twice a year, about the middle of April and about Bartholomew-tide [= August 24]. Next to that is the musk-rose; then the strawberry leaves dying, with a most excellent cordial smell; then the flower of the vines. . . . which grows upon the cluster in the first coming forth; then sweet-brier, then wall-flowers, which are very delightful to be set under a parlor or lower chamber window; then pinks and gillyflowers, specially the matted pink and clove gillyflower; then the flowers of the lime-tree; then the honeysuckles, if they are somewhat afar off. I do not speak of the flowers of the bean, because they are field-flowers ·as distinct from garden-flowers·. Three kinds of flowers perfume the air most delightfully when they are trodden upon and crushed, namely burnet, wild thyme, and water-mints. So you can set whole alleys of them, to have the pleasure when you walk or tread.

For gardens (speaking of those which are indeed prince-like, as I have done of buildings), the contents ought not well to be under thirty acres of ground, and to be divided into three parts; a green in the entrance, a heath, or desert, in

the going forth, and the main garden in the midst, besides alleys on both sides; and I like well that four acres of ground be assigned to the green, six to the heath, four and four to either side, and twelve to the main garden. The green has two pleasures: the one, because nothing is more pleasant to the eye than green grass kept finely shorn; the other, because it will give you a fair [see Glossary] alley in the midst, by which you may go in front upon a stately hedge, which is to enclose the garden. But because the alley will be long, and in great heat of the year or day, you ought not to buy the shade in the garden by going in the sun through the green; so you should plant on either side of the green a covert alley, upon carpenter's work, about twelve foot in height, by which you may go in shade into the garden. . . . The garden is best to be square, encompassed on all the four sides with a stately arched hedge: the arches to be upon pillars of carpenter's work, of some ten foot high, and six foot broad, and the spaces between of the same dimension with the breadth of the arch. Over the arches let there be an entire hedge of some four foot high, framed also upon carpenter's work; and upon the upper hedge, over every arch a little turret, with a belly enough to receive a cage of birds; and over every space between the arches some other little figure, with broad plates of round coloured glass gilt, for the sun to play upon; but this hedge I intend to be raised upon a bank, not steep, but gently sloped, of some six foot, set all with flowers. Also, I understand that this square of the garden should not be the whole breadth of the ground, but to leave on either side ground enough for diversity of side alleys, unto which the two covert alleys of the green may lead you; but there must be no alleys with hedges at either end of this great enclosure; not at the near end, for blocking your view of this fair hedge from the green, nor at the further end for blocking your view from the hedge through the arches to the heath.

For the ordering of the ground within the great hedge, I leave it to variety of device; but advising that whatever form you cast it into first, let it not be too bushy, or full of work. For my part, I do not like images cut out in juniper or other garden stuff; they are ·amusing· for children. I like well little low hedges, round like welts, with some pretty pyramids, and in some places fair [see Glossary] columns upon frames of carpenter's work. I would also have the alleys spacious and fair. You may have closer alleys upon the side grounds, but none in the main garden. . . .

Fountains are a great beauty and refreshment; but pools mar everything and make the garden unwholesome, and full of flies and frogs. Fountains I intend to be of two natures: one that sprinkls or spouts water; the other, a fair recipient of water, of some thirty or forty foot square, but without fish, slime or mud. For the first, the ornaments of images, gilt or of marble, which are in use, do well; but the main matter is to move the water so that it it never stays, either in the bowls or in the cistern; that the water is never stagnant in such a way that it •becomes discoloured—green or red or the like—or •gathers any mossiness or putrefaction. Besides that, it is to be cleansed every day by hand; also, some steps up to it, and some fine pavement around it, does well. As for the other kind of fountain, which we may call a bathing-pool, it may admit much curiosity and beauty, with which I shall not trouble myself ·here· But the main point is the same as the one I mentioned in the former kind of fountain; which is that the water be in perpetual motion, fed by a water higher than the pool, and delivered into it by fair spouts, and then discharged away under ground, by some equality of bores, so that it stays little; and for fine devices, water •falling in a perfect arch, without any spray escaping from the jet, and •rising in several forms (of feathers, drinking-glasses, canopies, and the like); they are pretty things to look on, but

·add· nothing to health and sweetness.

For the heath, which was the third part of our plot, I wish it to be framed as much as may be to a natural wildness. I would have no trees in it, but some thickets made only of sweet-brier and honeysuckle, interspersed with some wild vine; and the ground set with violets, strawberries and primroses, for these are sweet and prosper in the shade, and these to be in the heath here and there, not in any order. . . .

Fill the side grounds with a variety of private alleys, so placed that wherever the sun is at a given time some of them will give a full shade. Frame some of them likewise for shelter, so that when the wind blows sharply you may walk as in a gallery: and those alleys must be likewise hedged at both ends, to keep out the wind; and these closer alleys must be ever finely gravelled, with no grass, because of going wet. In many of these alleys, likewise, set fruit-trees of all sorts, upon the walls as well as in rows; and the borders wherein you plant your fruit-trees should generally be fair, large, low, and not steep; and set with fine flowers, but sparingly, lest they insidiously extract nourishment from the trees. At the end of both the side grounds I would have a mount of some pretty height, leaving the wall of the enclosure breast high, to look abroad into the fields. . . .

I do not like aviaries, except ones that are large enough to be turfed and have living plants and bushes set in them; so that •the birds have more scope and natural nesting, and that •no foulness appears on the floor of the aviary. So I have made a platform of a princely garden, partly by precept, partly by drawing; not a *model*, but some general lines of it; and in this I have spared for no cost. But it is nothing for great princes who—mostly taking advice from workmen—to set their things together at no less cost, sometimes adding •statues and such things for state and magnificence, but •nothing to the true pleasure of a garden.

47. Negotiating

It is generally better to deal by speech than by letter; and by the mediation of a third party than by a man's self. Letters are good when •one wants an answer by letter back again, or when •it may serve for one's justification afterwards to produce one's own letter, or where •there is a risk of its being interrupted or heard by pieces. To deal in person is good when a man's face breeds regard, as it commonly does •with inferiors or •in tender cases where a man's eye upon the countenance of him with whom he speaks, may give the latter a direction how far to go; and generally •where a man will reserve to himself liberty either to disavow or to expound.

In choice of instruments [here = 'mediators'], it is better to choose

men of a plainer sort, who are likely to do what is committed to them, and to report back faithfully on the outcome,

than

cunning men who contrive out of other men's business something to grace themselves, and who aim to give satisfaction by how they *report* their doings.

Use also such persons as are pleased with the business they are employed in, for that quickens much; and such as are *fit* for that business, such as •bold men for expostulation, •fairspoken men for persuasion, •crafty men for inquiry and observation, •wilful and absurd men for business that does not well bear itself out. Use also such as have been lucky and prevailed before in things in which you have employed them; for that breeds confidence, and they will try to keep up their record. . . . It is better dealing with men who still want something that they do not have than with those who are satisfied with where they are. [Now follows a three-sentence passage by which the preparer of this version is defeated:]

If a man deal with another upon conditions, the start of first performance is all; which a man cannot reasonably demand, except either the nature of the thing be such, which must go before; or else a man can persuade the other party, that he shall still need him in some other thing; or else that he be counted the honestest man. All practice is to discover, or to work. Men discover themselves in trust, in passion, at unawares; and, of necessity, when they would have somewhat done, and cannot find an apt pretext.

If you would work any man, you must know either

- his nature and fashions, and so lead him; or
- his ends, and so persuade him; or
- his weakness and disadvantages, and so awe him (or those who have interest in him) and so govern him.

In dealing with cunning persons, to interpret what they say we must always consider their ends; and it is good to say little to them, and that which they least look for. In all negotiations of difficulty, a man should not look to sow and reap at once, but must •first• prepare business and then ripen it by degrees.

48. Followers and friends

Costly followers are not to be liked, lest while a man makes his train longer he make his wings shorter. I count as 'costly' not only those who charge the purse but also those who are wearisome and importune [see Glossary] in suits. Ordinary followers ought to look for nothing higher from the person they follow than countenance, recommendation, and protection from wrongs. Factious followers are even less to be liked; they are the ones who follow him with whom they range themselves not out of •affection for him but out

of •discontentment conceived against some other; which is commonly the source of that ill intelligence that we often see between great personages. Likewise noisily boastful followers, who perform as trumpets of the commendations of those they follow, are full of inconvenience, for they taint business through lack of secrecy; and they export •honour from a man and make him a return in •envy. There is a kind of followers that are dangerous, being indeed spies who inquire into the secrets of the house, and bear tales of them to others. Yet such men are often in great favour, for they are officious, and commonly exchange tales. The following by certain professions of men corresponding to that which a great person himself professes (as of soldiers to him who has been employed in the wars, and the like) has always been a thing civil and well taken even in monarchies, provided it is without too much pomp or popularity. But the most honourable kind of following is to be followed as one who knows to advance virtue and desert in all sorts of persons; and yet, where there is no eminent odds in sufficiency, it is better to take with the more passable, than with the more able; and, besides, to speak truth in base times, •active men are of more use than •virtuous ones. It is true that in government it is good to use men of one rank equally; for to countenance some extraordinarily is to make them insolent, and the rest discontented. . . . but contrariwise to use men with much difference in favour. . . . is good; for it makes the preferred persons more thankful, and the rest more officious, because all that is wanted is favour. It is good discretion not to make too much of any man at the first, because one cannot maintain that inequality.

To be governed (as we call it) by one person is not safe, for it shows weakness and indecision, and gives a freedom to

scandal and disrepute; for those who would not censure, or speak ill of a man immediately, will talk more boldly of those who are in such great favour with him, and thereby wound his honour;⁹⁴ yet to be distracted by many is worse, for it makes men to be of the last impression and full of change. To take advice of some few friends is always honourable; for lookers-on many times see more than gamesters, and the valley best reveals the hill. There is little friendship in the world, and least of all between equals, which was accustomed to be magnified. What friendship there is is between superior and inferior, whose fortunes may comprehend the one the other.

49. Suitors

Many bad matters and projects are undertaken; and •bad-private suits putrefy the public good. Many good matters are undertaken with bad minds; I mean not only *corrupt* minds but *crafty* minds that do not intend performance. Some people embrace suits without ever meaning to deal effectually in them; but if they see there may be life in the matter, by some other means they will be content to win a thank-you, or take a second reward, or at least to make use in the mean time of the suitor's hopes. Some take hold of suits only for an occasion to cross someone else, or to make an information of which they could not otherwise have apt pretext, without caring what becomes of the suit when that purpose is served; or generally to make other men's business a kind of entertainment to bring in their own •business•. Indeed, some undertake suits solely in order to let them fall, aiming to gratify the adverse party, or competitor. Surely, there is in some way a right in every suit; either a right of

⁹⁴ [Bacon writes 'wound their honour', presumably a slip.]

equity if it is a suit of controversy, or a right of desert if it is a suit of petition. If affection [see Glossary] leads a man to favour the wrong side in **justice**, let him use his countenance to compound the matter rather than to carry it. If affection leads a man to favour the less worthy in **desert**, let him do it without humiliating or disabling the better deserver. In suits which a man does not well understand, it is good to refer them to some friend of trust and judgment to report whether he may deal in them with honour; but let him choose his advisors well, for otherwise he may be led by the nose. Suitors are so disgusted with delays and abuses that plain dealing in

declining to deal in suits at first, and reporting the success of a suit without exaggeration, and expecting no more thanks than one has deserved

has come to be not only honourable but also gracious. In suits of favour, the first coming ought to have little effect, to this extent that consideration may be had of his trust, that if knowledge of the matter could not have been had except by him advantage be not taken of the information, but the party left to his other means, and in some way recompensed for his discovery.⁹⁵ To be ignorant of the value of a suit is simplicity; as well as to be ignorant of the right thereof is lack of conscience [see Glossary]. Secrecy in suits is a great means of success; for voicing things in forwardness may discourage some kinds of suitors, but it does quicken and awake others. But timing of the suit is the principal thing; timing, I say, not only in respect of the person who should grant it, but in respect of those who are likely to cross it. Let a man in his choice of means, choose the fittest means rather than the greatest means; and choose those who deal in certain things rather than those who are general. The reparation

of a denial is sometimes equal to the first grant, if a man show himself neither dejected nor discontented. *Iniquum petas, ut æquum feras* ['Ask what is exorbitant, so as to obtain what is moderate.'] is a good rule, where a man has strength of favour; but otherwise a man were better rise in his suit; for he who would have ventured at first to have lost the suitor, will not, in the conclusion, lose both the suitor and his own former favour. Nothing is thought so easy a request to a great person as his letter: and yet if it is not in a good cause, it is so much out of his reputation. There are no worse instruments than these general contrivers of suits; for they are but a kind of poison and infection to public proceedings.

50. Studies

Studies serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability. Their chief use for delight, is in privateness and retiring; for ornament, is in discourse; and for ability, is in the judgment and disposition of business; for expert men can execute, and perhaps judge of particulars one by one; but the general counsels, and the plots and marshalling of affairs, come best from those who are learned. To spend too much time in studies, is sloth; to use them too much for ornament, is affectation; to make judgment wholly by their rules, is the attitude of a scholar. They perfect nature, and are perfected by experience; for natural abilities are like natural plants, that need pruning by study; and studies themselves yield directions that are too much at large unless they are bounded in by experience. Crafty men contemn [see Glossary] studies, simple men admire them, and wise men use them; for they do not teach their own use; how to use studies is a wisdom outside them and above them, won by observation. Do not

⁹⁵ [Here, as often in Bacon's day, 'discovery' means something like 'revelation'. The person is to recompensed for having made something known.]

read in order to

- contradict and confute, or
- believe and take for granted, or
- find talk and discourse, but
- to weigh and consider.

Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested; that is, some books are to be read only in parts; others to be read, but not attentively; and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention. Some books also may be read by deputy, and extracts made of them by others; but that would be only in the less important arguments and the meaner [see Glossary] sort of books; otherwise distilled books are, like common distilled waters, vapidly tasteless. Reading makes a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man; and, therefore, if a man writes little, he needs to have a great memory; if he confers little, he needs to have a present wit; and if he reads little, he needs to have much cunning, so as to seem to know what he does not know. Histories make men wise; they make poets witty. Men are made

- subtle by mathematics,
- deep by natural philosophy,
- grave by moral philosophy,
- able to contend by logic and rhetoric.

Abeunt studia in mores ['Studies become habits.'] Indeed, there is no difficulty or blockage in the wit that cannot be produced by some kind of studies. Just as diseases of the body may have appropriate exercises:

- bowling is good for the stone and kidneys,
- shooting for the lungs and breast,
- gentle walking for the stomach,
- riding for the head,

and the like; so, if a man's wit is wandering, let him study mathematics; for in ·mathematical· demonstrations, if his wit is called away ever so little, he must begin again; if his wit is not apt to distinguish or find difference, let him study the schoolmen, for they are *Cymini sectores* ['Hair-splitters'] If he is not apt to beat over matters, and to call up one thing to prove and illustrate another, let him study the lawyers' cases. So there may be a special prescription for every defect of the mind.

51. Faction

Many people think wrongly that for a prince to govern his estate, or for a great person to govern his proceedings, a principal part of policy is to govern according to the respect of factions, whereas on the contrary the chief wisdom is either in •ordering those things that are general, in which men of different factions do nevertheless agree, or in •dealing with matters relating to particular persons, one by one. But I am not saying that the consideration of factions is to be neglected. Mean [see Glossary] men in their rising must adhere ·to someone higher than them·; but great men who have strength in themselves would do better to maintain themselves indifferent [see Glossary] and neutral;

yet , even in beginners, to adhere so moderately, as he be a man of the one faction, which is most passable with the other, commonly gives best way.⁹⁶

The lower and weaker faction is the firmer in conjunction; and it is often seen that a small number of men who are stiff do tire out a greater number who are more moderate. When one of the factions is extinguished, the remainder subdivides; as the faction between Lucullus and the rest of the nobles

⁹⁶ [This passage is indented as an indication that the maker of this version doesn't understand it.]

of the senate (which they called *optimates*) held out a while against the faction of Pompey and Cæsar; but when the senate's authority was pulled down, Cæsar and Pompey soon after broke with one another. The faction or party of Antonius and Octavianus Cæsar, against Brutus and Cassius, held out likewise for a time; but soon after Brutus and Cassius were overthrown, Antonius and Octavianus broke with one another and subdivided. These examples are of wars, but the same holds in private factions; and, therefore, those who are seconds in factions do many times, when the faction subdivides, prove to be principals; but many times also they prove to be ciphers, and are cashiered; for many a man's strength is in opposition; and when that fails he grows out of use. It is commonly seen that when a man is once placed he takes up with the faction contrary to that by which he entered; perhaps thinking that he has the first one sure and now is ready for a new purchase. The traitor in faction lightly goes away with it; for when matters have stuck long in balancing, the winning of some one man causes one side to preponderate, and he gets all the thanks. The even carriage between two factions does not always come from moderation, but can come from trueness to the self of a man who aims to make use of both. Certainly, in Italy, they hold it a little suspect in popes when they have often in their mouth *Padre commune* ['the common father'] and take it to be a sign that the speaker means to refer all to the greatness of *his own* house. Kings had need beware of how they side themselves, and make themselves as of a faction or party; for leagues within the state are ever pernicious to monarchies; for they raise an obligation paramount to obligation of sovereignty, and make the king *tanquam unus ex nobis* ['merely one of us'], as was to be seen in the League of France. When factions are

carried too high and too violently, it is a sign of weakness in princes, and much to the prejudice of their authority and their business. The motions of factions under kings, ought to be like the motions (as the astronomers speak) of the inferior orbs, which may have their proper motions, but yet still are quietly carried by the higher motion of the *primum mobile*.

52. Ceremonies and Respects

He who is only real⁹⁷ needs to have exceeding great parts of virtue, as a stone that is set without foil needs to be rich; but it is in praise and commendation of men as it is in gettings and gains; for the proverb is true that 'Light gains make heavy purses'; for light gains come thick and fast, whereas great ones come only now and then. So it is true that small matters win great commendation because they are continually in use and taken note of, whereas the occasion of any great virtue comes only on festivals; therefore having good forms adds much to a man's reputation, and is . . . like having perpetual commendatory letters. To attain them, it almost suffices not to despise them, for so shall a man observe them in others; for if he labours too much to express them, he will lose their grace, which is to be natural and unaffected. Some men's behaviour is like a verse, wherein every syllable is measured; how can a man comprehend great matters if he breaks his mind too much to small observations?

Not to use ceremonies at all is to teach others not to use them again, and so diminishes respect to oneself; especially if they are not omitted in the case of strangers and formal natures. But dwelling upon them and exalting them above the moon is not only tedious but diminishes the faith and

⁹⁷ [as distinct from being not only real but laden with honours (see the next part of the sentence).]

credit of him who speaks; and certainly there is a kind of conveying of effectual and imprinting passages amongst compliments, which is of singular use if a man can hit upon it. Amongst a man's peers, he shall be sure of familiarity, so it is good to keep state a little; amongst his inferiors he will be sure of reverence, so it is good to be a little familiar. He who is too much in any thing, so that he gives another occasion of satiety, makes himself cheap. It is good for a man to apply himself ceremonially to others, provided he shows that he does it upon regard and not upon facility [i.e. shows that he does this out of respect for the 'others', not because such ceremonies come easily to him].

It is in general a good precept when seconding another [i.e. when speaking in support of someone else's toast or words of praise] to add something of one's own. For example:

- if you grant his opinion, let it be with some distinction;
- if you follow his motion, let it be with some condition;
- if you accept his advice, let it be with offering further reasons.

Men need to beware of being too perfect in compliments; for however sufficient they are otherwise, their enviers will be sure to give them that attribute to the disadvantage of their greater virtues. It is loss, also, in business, to be too full of respects, or to be too curious [see Glossary] in observing times and opportunities. Solomon says 'He who considers the wind shall not sow, and he who looks to the clouds shall not reap.' [Ecclesiastes 11.1]. A wise man will *make* more opportunities than he *finds*. Men's behaviour should be like their apparel, not too tight or minutely made, but free for exercise or motion.

53. Praise

Praise is the reflection of virtue; but it is glass...which gives the reflection. If it is from the common people, it is commonly false and **naught**, and follows vain persons rather than virtuous ones, for the common people do not understand many excellent virtues. The lowest virtues draw •praise from them, the middle virtues produce •astonishment or admiration in them, but of the highest virtues they have no sense or perceiving at all; but shows and *species virtutibus similes* ['appearances resembling virtues'] serve best with them. Certainly, fame is like a river that bears up things that are light and swollen, and drowns things that are weighty and solid; but if persons of quality and judgment agree, then it is (as the Scripture says) *Nomen bonum instar unguenti fragrantis* ['A good name is like sweet-smelling ointment.' Ecclesiastes vii:1]; it fills all round about, and will not easily dissipate; for the odours of ointments are more durable than those of flowers. There are so many false points of praise, that a man may justly hold it [i.e. hold praise as such] to be suspect. Some praises are mere matters of flattery; and if someone is an ordinary flatterer, he will have certain common attributes which may serve every man; if he is a cunning flatterer, he will follow the arch-flatterer, which is a man's self, and wherein a man thinks best of himself, therein the flatterer will uphold him most... Some praises come from good wishes and respects, which is a form due in civility to kings and great persons. And then there is *laudando præcipere* ['Instruction in the form of praise'], where the praiser, by telling men what they are, represents to them what they should be. Some men are praised maliciously to their hurt, stirring envy and jealousy towards them: *Pessimum genus inimicorum laudantium* ['The worst kind of enemies are those who flatter']... Certainly, moderate praise—used with opportunity, and not

vulgar—is that which does the good. Solomon says: ‘He who praises his friend aloud, rising early, it shall be to him no better than a curse’ (*Proverbs* xxvii:14.) Too much magnifying of man or matter does stir up contradiction, and procure envy and scorn. For a man to praise himself is indecent, except in rare cases; but a man can praise his own office or profession with good grace and with a kind of magnanimity. The cardinals of Rome (who are theologians) and friars and schoolmen have a phrase of notable contempt and scorn towards civil business; for they label as **sbirrerie** all temporal [see Glossary] business of wars, embassages, judicature, and other employments. This is calling them ‘under-sheriffries’, as if they were merely matters for under-sheriffs and catch-poles; though many times those under-sheriffries do more good than the high speculations of the cardinals, friars, etc.. St. Paul, when he speaks of himself he often interjects ‘I speak like a fool’ [2 *Corinthians* 11:16], but speaking of his calling he says *Magnificabo apostolatium meum* [I shall magnify my apostolate.]

54. Vainglory

It was prettily devised by Æsop: the fly sat upon the axle-tree of the chariot-wheel, and said ‘What a dust I am raising!’ Like the fly, there are some vain persons who, whatever goes alone or moves upon greater means, think it is they that carry it, however small their actual part in it. Those who are glorious, must needs be factious; for all swaggering vanity stands upon comparisons. They must needs be violent, to make good their own vaunts; neither can they be secret, so they are not effective but, according to the French proverb, *Beaucoup de bruit, peu de fruit* [‘Much noise, little fruit’]. Yet there is certainly a use

for this quality in civil affairs. Where there is a good opinion and fame to be created, either of virtue or greatness, these men are good trumpeters. Again, as Titus Livius notes in the case of Antiochus and the ætolians, there are sometimes great effects of lies; as if a man who negotiates between two princes, wanting to draw them to join in a war against a third, extols the forces of either of them above measure, the one to the other; and sometimes he who deals between man and man raises his own credit with both by pretending greater interest than he has in either; and in these and similar ways it often falls out that something is produced out of nothing; for lies—although they are **naught**—are sufficient to breed opinion, and opinion brings on substance. In military commanders and soldiers, vainglory is essential; for as iron sharpens iron so by glory one courage sharpens another. In cases of great enterprise... a composition of vainglorious natures puts life into business; and those who are of solid and sober natures have more of the ballast than of the sail. In fame of learning, the flight will be slow without some feathers of ostentation: *Qui de contemnenda gloria libros scribunt, nomen suum inscribunt*. [‘Those who write books on despising glory, set their names in the title-page’ (Cicero).] Socrates, Aristotle, Galen, were men full of ostentation: certainly, vainglory helps to perpetuate a man’s memory; and virtue was never so indebted to human nature as when it received its due at the second hand. Neither had the fame of Cicero, Seneca or the younger Pliny borne her⁹⁸ age so well if it had not been joined with some vanity in themselves, like varnish that makes ceilings not only shine but last. But by ‘vainglory’ I do not mean the property that Tacitus attributes to Mucianus, *Omnium, quæ dixerat feceratque, arte quadam ostentator* [‘One who set off every thing he said and did with a certain

⁹⁸ [Presumably this feminisation of fame is borrowed from the idea of Fame as a goddess [see Glossary].]

skill]; but rather one that comes not from vanity but from natural magnanimity and discretion; and in some persons is not only comely but gracious; for apologies, concessions, modesty itself when well-governed, are nothing but arts of ostentation; and amongst those arts there is none better than the one the younger Pliny speaks of, which is to be liberal of praise and commendation to others, in that wherein a man's self has any perfection. For, says Pliny wittily, 'In commending another, you do yourself right; for he that you commend is either superior to you in the respect you commend him for, or inferior; if he is inferior, then if he is to be commended, then you much more; if he is superior, then if he is not to be commended, then you much less.'

Boastful men are the scorn of wise men, the admiration of fools, the idols of parasites, and the slaves of their own boasts.

55. Honour and Reputation

The winning of honour is but the revealing of a man's virtue and worth without disadvantage. When this happens *with* disadvantage, that will be one of the cases where people in their actions woo and affect honour and reputation without entitlement; which sort of men are commonly much talked of, but inwardly little admired; and some of them, contrariwise, darken their virtue in the show of it, so that common opinion undervalues them. If a man performs something that has not been attempted before, or has been attempted and given up, or has been achieved but in difficult circumstances, this will bring him more honour than he can get by affecting to have done something with greater difficulty or more value in which he is merely a follower. If a man so tempers his actions that in some one of them he does content every

faction or combination of people, the music will be the fuller. A man is a poor guardian of his honour if he embarks on any action the failing of which may disgrace him more than the carrying of it through can honour him. Honour that is gained and broken upon [= 'at the expense of'] someone else has the quickest reflection, like diamonds cut with facets; and therefore let a man who has competitors in the matter of honour try to excel them by outshooting them (if he can) with their own bow.

Discreet followers and servants help much to reputation: *Omnis fama a domesticis emanat* ['All fame comes from servants' (Cicero)]. Envy, which is the canker of honour, is best extinguished by •a man's declaring his aim to be the acquiring of merit rather than fame, and by •attributing his successes to Divine providence and felicity rather than to his own virtue or policy.

The true ranking of the degrees of sovereign honour are these. In the **first** place are *conditores imperiorum* ['Founders of empires'], founders of states and commonwealths, such as were Romulus, Cyrus, Cæsar, Ottoman, Ismael. In the **second** place are *legislatores*, lawgivers, who are also called second founders, or *perpetui principes* ['Perpetual rulers'], because they govern by their ordinances after they are gone; such were Lycurgus, Solon, Justinian, Edgar the Peaceful of England, Alphonsus of Castile, the Wise, who made *Siete Partidas*, a seven-part collection of Spanish laws. In the **third** place are *liberatores* or *salvatores* ['deliverers' or 'preservers'], such as bring to an end the long miseries of civil wars, or deliver their countries from servitude to foreigners or tyrants, such as Augustus Cæsar, Vespasianus, Aurelianus, Theodoricus, King Henry VII of England, King Henry IV of France. In the **fourth** place are *propagatores* or *propugnatores imperii* ['extenders' or 'defenders of the empire'], such as in honourable wars enlarge their territories or make noble defence against

invaders. And in the **fifth and last** place are *patres patria* ['fathers of their country'], who reign justly, and make good the times wherein they live. There have been so many cases of the fourth and fifth kinds that there is no need for me to cite examples.

Degrees of honour in subjects are as follows. **(1)** *participes curarum* ['participators in cares'], those upon whom princes discharge the greatest weight of their affairs—their 'right hands', as we call them. **(2)** The next are *duces belli* ['Leaders in war'], great leaders such as are princes' lieutenants, and do them notable services in the wars. **(3)** The third are *gratiosi*, favourites, who are solace to the sovereign and harmless to the people. **(4)** And the fourth, *negotiis pares* ['equal to their duties'], such as have great places under princes, and execute their places with sufficiency. There is an honour, likewise, which may be ranked among the greatest, though it happens rarely; that is, the honour of those who sacrifice themselves to death or danger for the good of their country, such as M. Regulus and the two Decii.

56. Judicature.

Judges ought to remember that their office is *jus dicere* and not *jus dare*—to interpret law and not to make or give law; otherwise it will be like the authority claimed by the Church of Rome, which, under the pretext of exposition of Scripture, does not hesitate to add and alter, and to *pronounce* that which they do not *find*, and to introduce novelty by show of antiquity. Judges ought to be more learned than witty, more reverend than plausible [see Glossary], and more advised than confident. Above all things, *integrity* is their portion and proper virtue.

The ·Mosaic· law says 'Cursed is he who removes the landmark' (*Deuteronomy 27:17*). The mislayer of a mere stone is to blame; but it is the unjust judge who is the chief remover of landmarks, when he wrongly defines the boundaries of lands and property. **a** One foul sentence does more hurt than **b** many foul examples; for **b** these merely corrupt the stream, whereas **a** the other corrupts the fountain. So says Solomon: *Fons turbatus et vena corrupta est justus cadens in causa sua coram adversario* ['A righteous man falling down before the wicked is as a troubled fountain and a corrupt spring' (*Proverbs 25:26*)]

The office of judges may have reference to **(1)** the parties that sue, to **(2)** the advocates that plead, to **(3)** the clerks and ministers [see Glossary] of justice underneath them, and to **(4)** the sovereign or state above them.

(1) First, for the causes or parties that sue. 'There are' (says the Scripture) 'those who turn judgment into wormwood' (*Amos 5:7*, and surely there are also those who turn it into vinegar; for injustice makes it bitter, and delays make it sour. The principal duty of a judge is to suppress force and fraud; of which force is the more pernicious when it is open, and fraud when it is close and disguised. And then there are contentious suits, which ought to be spewed out as the surfeit of courts. A judge ought to prepare his way to a just sentence, as God prepares his way, by raising valleys and taking down hills; so when there appears on either side of a suit a high hand, violent prosecution, cunning advantages taken, combination, power, great counsel, then it is the judge's role to make inequality equal, so that he may plant his judgment as upon an even ground. . . . Judges must beware of hard constructions and strained inferences; for there is no worse torture than the torture

⁹⁹ [That is: that a penalty initially set as a deterrent ('terror') comes to be regarded as something that the criminal simply deserves ('rigour'); Bacon

of laws. Especially in the case of penal laws, they ought to have care that that which was meant for terror be not turned into rigour;⁹⁹ and that they do not bring upon the people the 'shower' whereof the Scripture speaks: *Pluet super eos laqueos* ['He will rain snares upon them.' *Psalms* 11:6]; for penal laws applied strenuously are a shower of snares upon the people. Therefore, if penal laws have long been sleepers, or if they have become unfit for the present time, wise judges will limit them in the execution: *Judicis officium est ut res, ita tempora rerum* ['It is the duty of a judge to consider not only the facts, but the circumstances of the case'] (Ovid). In causes of life and death, judges ought (as far as the law permits) in justice to remember mercy, and to cast a severe eye upon the example, but a merciful eye upon the person.

(2) Secondly, for the advocates and counsel that plead. Patience and gravity of hearing is an essential part of justice,¹⁰⁰ and an overspeaking judge is no well-tuned cymbal. It is no grace to a judge •first to *find* that which he might have *heard* in due time from the bar; or •to show quickness of thinking in cutting off evidence or counsel too short, or •to prevent information by questions, though pertinent.¹⁰¹ The parts of a judge in hearing are four: (i) to direct the evidence; (ii) to moderate speech which is too long, repetitious, or irrelevant; (iii) to recapitulate, select, and collate the material points of what has been said; and (iv) to give the rule or sentence. Anything beyond these is too much, and comes either from •glory [= self-glorification] and willingness to speak, or from •impatience to hear, or from •shortness of memory, or from

•lack of a steady and equal attention. It is a strange thing to see that the boldness of advocates should prevail with judges; whereas they should imitate God in whose seat they sit, who represses the presumptuous and gives grace to the modest; but it is even more strange that judges should have noted favourites among advocates, which cannot but cause multiplication of fees, and suspicion of by-ways [i.e. of underhand dealings]. There is due from the judge to the advocate some commendation and favour, where causes are well handled and fair pleaded, especially towards the side which does not succeed, for that upholds in the client the reputation of his counsel, and lowers his confidence that his cause was a good one. There is likewise due to the public a civil reprimand of advocates where there appears to be

- cunning counsel,
- gross neglect,
- slight information,
- indiscreet pressing, or
- an over-bold defence;

and let not the counsel at the bar, after the judge has declared his sentence, argue points with the judge or wind himself into the handling of the cause anew. But on the other side let not the judge meet the cause half-way, or give occasion to the party to say that his counsel or proofs were not heard.

(3) Thirdly, for that which concerns clerks and ministers [see Glossary]. The place of justice is a hallowed place, and therefore not only the bench but also the foot-pace and

clearly regards this as a move towards *greater* severity, though that is not conveyed by the shift from 'terror' to 'rigour' as we understand those words.]

¹⁰⁰ Pliny the younger has the observation: *Patientiam quæ pars magna justitiæ est* ['Patience, which is a great part of justice.']

¹⁰¹ [This seemingly odd sentence uses 'prevent' in its once-normal sense of 'go before' or 'get in ahead of'. Bacon's claim here—which goes with the last sentence of this paragraph—is that the judge should not put to an advocate questions which presuppose things that the advocate was planning to say.]

precincts and purpose thereof ought to be preserved without scandal and corruption; for certainly, as the Scripture says, ‘Grapes will not be gathered from thorns or thistles’, neither can justice yield her fruit with sweetness amongst the briers and brambles of plundering clerks and ministers. The attendance of courts is subject to four bad instruments: first, certain persons who are sowers of ·law·suits, who make the court swell and the country pine; the second sort is of those who engage courts in quarrels of jurisdiction, and are not truly *amici curiæ* but *parasiti curiæ*—not friends of the court but parasites of the court—who puff a court up beyond its boundaries for their own scraps and advantage; the third sort is of those who may be regarded as the left hands of courts; persons who are full of nimble and sinister¹⁰² tricks and shifts, by which they pervert the plain and direct courses of courts, and bring justice into oblique lines and labyrinths; and the fourth is the extortionist and exacter of fees; which justifies the common likening of the courts of justice to the bush into which a sheep flies for defence in ·harsh· weather, where he is sure to lose part of his fleece. On the other side, an ancient clerk, skilful in precedents, wary in proceeding, and understanding in the business of the court, is an excellent finger of a court, and does many times point the way to the judge himself.

(4) Fourthly, for that which may concern the sovereign and estate. Judges ought above all •to remember the conclusion of the Roman Twelve Tables, *Salus populi suprema lex* [‘The welfare of the populace is the supreme law.]; and •to know that when laws are not aimed at that end, they are but things captious, and oracles not well inspired. Therefore it is a happy thing in a state when **a** kings and states often consult with judges; and again when **b** judges often consult

with the king and state: the **a** one when some matter of law comes up in the business of state; the **b** other when some consideration of state comes up in a matter of law; for many times a law-case that comes down to the difference between *meum* and *tuum*—[‘mine’ and ‘yours’]—have reasons and consequences that extend into points of estate. I count as matters of estate not only the parts of sovereignty, but anything that introduces any great alteration or dangerous precedent, or plainly concerns any great portion of people. And let no man weakly conceive that just laws and true policy have any antipathy, for they are like the spirits and sinews: one moves with the other. Let judges also remember that Solomon’s throne was supported by lions on both sides (1 *Kings* 10:19,30). Let them be lions, but yet lions *under* the throne, being careful not to check or oppose any points of sovereignty. Let not judges also be so ignorant of their own right as to think there is not left to them, as a principal part of their office, a wise use and application of laws; for they may remember what the apostle says of a greater law than theirs: *Nos scimus quia lex bona est, modo quis ea utatur legitime* [‘We know that the law is good if a man uses it lawfully’ (1 *Timothy* 1:8.)]

57. Anger

To seek to extinguish anger utterly is a mere boast of the Stoics. We have better oracles: ‘Be angry, but sin not; let not the sun go down upon your anger’ (*Ephesians* 4:26). Anger must be limited and confined, both in race and in time. I shall speak first about (1) how the natural inclination and habit to be angry may be tempered and calmed; secondly (2) how the particular motions of anger may be repressed, or at

¹⁰² [‘sinister’ is Latin for ‘left’.]

least restrained from doing mischief [see Glossary]; and thirdly **(3)** how to raise or appease anger in someone else.

(1) For the first, there is no other way but to meditate and ruminate well upon the effects of anger, how it troubles man's life; and the best time to do this is to look back upon anger when the fit is thoroughly over. Seneca says well that 'anger is like ruin, which breaks *itself* upon that which it falls on.' The Scripture exhorts us to 'possess our souls in patience' (*Luke* 16:19); whoever is out of patience, is out of possession of his soul. Men must not become bees, *animasque in vulnere ponunt* ['and leave their lives in the wound' (Virgil)]. Anger is certainly a kind of baseness; as it appears well in the weakness of the subjects in whom it reigns: children, women, old folks, sick folks. Only men must beware that they carry their anger with scorn rather than with fear; so that they may seem to be above the injury rather than below it; which is a thing easily done if a man will set himself in it.

(2) For the second point, the causes and motives of anger are chiefly three. **(a)** First, to be too sensible of hurt, for no man is angry that does not feel himself hurt; and therefore tender and delicate persons must often be angry, because they have so many things to trouble them which more robust natures have little sense of. **(b)** The next is thinking about and analysing the injury offered, which in the circumstances generates contempt; for contempt is what puts an edge upon anger, as much as (or more than) the hurt itself; so that when men are ingenious in picking out circumstances of contempt, they kindle their anger much. **(c)** Lastly, a man's opinion of the harm that has been done to his reputation multiplies and sharpens anger; the remedy for which is that a man should have, as Gonsalvo was wont to say, *Telam honouris crassiorem* ['A thicker covering for his honour']. But in all refrainings of anger it is the best remedy to win time, and

to make a man believe that the opportunity for his revenge has not yet come; but that he foresees a time for it, and so stills himself in the mean time.

To restrain anger from mischief [see Glossary], though it take hold of a man, there are two things of which you must have special caution: **(i)** the one, of extreme bitterness of words, especially if they are pointed and peculiarly appropriate to the party attacked, for that is much worse than *communia maledicta* ['ordinary abuse']; and, again, that in anger a man reveal no secrets, for that makes him not fit for society; and **(ii)** the other, that you do not peremptorily break off in any business in a fit of anger; but, however you show bitterness, do not do any thing that is not revocable.

(3) For raising anger in someone else, it is done chiefly by annoying him at a time when he is most difficult and ill-disposed; again, by gathering all that you can find out to increase the contempt: and the two ways of appeasing anger in someone else are by contraries: one is to take a good time when first to relate an angry business to a man, for the first impression is much; and the other is, to sever as much as possible the construction of the injury from the point of contempt, imputing it to misunderstanding, fear, passion, or what you will.

58. The vicissitude of things

Solomon says, 'There is no new thing upon the earth; the thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done, is that which shall be done; and there is no new thing under the sun. Is there any thing whereof it may be said, "See, this is new"? It hath been already of old time, which was before us.' *Ecclesiastes* 1:9-10. So that as Plato (in his *Phaedo*) fancied that all knowledge was

but remembrance, so Solomon gives his sentence, 'That all novelty is but oblivion'¹⁰³ whereby you may see that the river of Lethe runs above ground as well as below. There is an abstruse astrologer who says that

if it were not for two things that are constant—

(1) that the fixed stars always stand at the same distance one from another, and never come nearer together nor go further asunder; and

(2) that the diurnal motion perpetually keeps time, no individual would last one moment. Certain it is that matter is in a perpetual flux, and never keeps still.

The great winding-sheets that bury all things in oblivion are *deluges* and *earthquakes*. As for *conflagrations* and *great droughts*, they do not merely depopulate but destroy. Phaeton's car went but a day; and the three years' drought in the time of Elias¹⁰⁴ was confined to a limited space, and left people alive. As for the great burnings by lightnings, which are often in the West Indies,¹⁰⁵ they are but limited; but in the other two destructions, by deluge and earthquake, it is further to be noted, that the remnant of people which happen to be preserved are commonly ignorant mountain-people who can give no account of time past; so that the oblivion is all one, as if none had been left. If you consider well of the people of the West Indies, it is very probable that they are a newer, or a younger people than the people of the old world;

and it is much more likely that the destruction that has previously been there, was not by earthquakes,

((as the Egyptian priest told Solon, concerning the Island of Atlantis, that it was swallowed by an earthquake),

but rather that it was desolated by a particular deluge, for earthquakes seldom occur in those parts; but on the other side they have such pouring rivers as the rivers of Asia, and Africa, and Europe, are but brooks to them. Their Andes, likewise, or mountains, are far higher than those with us; which makes it seem that the remnants of generations of men were saved in such a particular deluge. As for the observation that Machiavelli has, that the jealousy of sects does much to extinguish the memory of things, traducing the tradition that Gregory the Great did all he could to extinguish all heathen antiquities, I do not find that those outbreaks of zealotry have any great effects or last long; as it appeared in those who succeeded Sabinian and did revive the former antiquities.¹⁰⁶

The vicissitude or mutations in the superior globe are no fit matter for this present argument. It may be that Plato's 'great year'¹⁰⁷ if the world should last so long, would have some effect, not in renewing **the state of like individuals** (for that is the fancy of those who conceive the celestial bodies have more accurate influences upon these things below than they really have), but **in gross**. Unquestionably comets have

¹⁰³ 'There is no remembrance of former things: neither shall there be any remembrance of things that are to come, with those that shall come hereafter.' *Ecclesiastes* 1:11

¹⁰⁴ 'And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.' (1 *Kings* 17:2. 'And it came to pass after many days that the word of the Lord came to Elijah in the third year, saying "Go, show thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth.'" (1 *Kings* 18:1.

¹⁰⁵ [The whole of the continent of America then discovered is included under this name.]

¹⁰⁶ [Sabinianus of Volaterra was elected Bishop of Rome on the death of Gregory the Great, CE 604. He was of an avaricious disposition, and thereby incurred the popular hatred. He died in eighteen months after his election.]

¹⁰⁷ [Cicero speaks of this as 'the great year of the mathematicians' in his 'The Nature of the Gods'.]

likewise power and effect over the gross and mass of things; but they are passively gazed at and observed in their journey, rather than wisely observed in their effects, especially in their respective effects; that is, what kind of comet

for magnitude, colour, version of the beams, placing in the region of heaven, or lasting
produces what kind of effects.

There is a fanciful tale which I have heard, and I would not have it given over, but waited upon a little. They say it is observed in the Low Countries (I know not in what part), that every 35 years the same kind and sequence of years and weather comes about again; as great frosts, great rains, great droughts, warm winters, summers with little heat, and the like; and they call it the prime. It is a thing I mention because, computing backwards, I have found some agreement.

But to leave these points of nature, and to come to men. The greatest vicissitude of things amongst men is the vicissitude of sects and religions; for those orbs rule most in men's minds. The true religion is built upon the rock; the rest are tossed upon the waves of time. I shall speak therefore of the causes of new sects, and give some counsel concerning them, as far as the weakness of human judgment can do anything to hold up such great revolutions.

When a formerly received religion is torn by discords, and when the holiness of the professors of religion is decayed and full of scandal, and in addition when the times are stupid, ignorant, and barbarous, you may expect the springing up of a new sect; if then also there should arise any extravagant and strange spirit to make himself author of this sect, all which points held when Mahomet published his law.¹⁰⁸ If a new sect does not have these two properties:

- supplanting or opposing established authority.

- giving license to pleasures and a voluptuous life,

fear it not, for it will not spread, for nothing is more popular than those. As for speculative [see Glossary] heresies (such as were in ancient times the Arians, and now the Arminians), though they work mightily upon men's wits they do not produce any great alterations in states, except with the help of civil occasions. There are three manners of plantation of new sects: **(1)** by the power of signs and miracles; **(2)** by the eloquence and wisdom of speech and persuasion; and **(3)** by the sword. As for martyrdoms, I reckon them amongst miracles, because they seem to exceed the strength of human nature; and I may do the same for superlative and admirable holiness of life. Surely, there is no better way to stop the rising of new sects and schisms than to reform abuses; to compound the smaller differences; to proceed mildly and not with bloody persecutions; and to take off the principal authors by winning and advancing them, rather than enraging them by violence and bitterness.

The changes and vicissitude in wars are many, but chiefly in three things: in the seats or stages of the war, in the weapons, and in the manner of the conduct. Wars in ancient time seemed more to move from east to west; for the Persians, Assyrians, Arabians, Tartars (which were the invaders), were all eastern people. It is true that the Gauls were western; but we read of only two incursions of theirs, the one to Gallo-Græcia, the other to Rome: but east and west have no certain points of heaven; and no more have the wars any certainty of observation, whether from the east or west; but north and south are fixed, and it has seldom if ever been seen that the far southern people have invaded the northern, but rather the reverse; which makes it obvious that the northern

¹⁰⁸ [The grammatical defect of this sentence—which has the form 'If P' with no following 'then Q'—is in Bacon's original, and is not a artifact of the present version.]

tract of the world is in nature the more martial region, be it in respect of the stars of that hemisphere or of the great continents that are upon the north; whereas, the south part, for aught that is known, is almost all sea; or (which is most apparent) of the cold of the northern parts, which is that which makes the bodies hardest and the courage warmest without aid of discipline.

Upon the breaking and shivering of a great state and empire, you may be sure to have wars; for great empires, while they stand, enervate and destroy the forces of the natives whom they have subdued, relying upon their own protecting forces; and then, when they also fall, all goes to ruin, and they become a prey. So was it in the decay of the Roman empire, and likewise in the empire of Germany after Charlemagne, every bird taking a feather, and something like it would probably befall Spain, if it should break. The great accessions and unions of kingdoms do likewise stir up wars; for when a state grows to an over-power, it is like a great flood, that will be sure to overflow, as it has been seen in the states of Rome, Turkey, Spain, and others. When the world has fewest barbarous people, but such as commonly will not marry or generate; . . . there is no danger of inundations of people; but when there are great shoals of people, who go on to populate, without foreseeing means of life and sustenance, it is bound to be the case that once in an age or two they discharge a portion of their people upon other nations, which the ancient northern people were accustomed to do by lot; using lots to decide what part should stay at home and what should seek their fortunes elsewhere. When a warlike state grows soft and effeminate, they may be sure of a war, for commonly such states are grown rich in the time of their degenerating; and so the prey invites a war, and their decay in valor encourages it.

As for the weapons, it hardly falls under rule and observa-

tion, yet we see even they have returns and vicissitudes; for certain it is that ordnance was known in the city of the Oxidracas, in India, and was that which the Macedonians—led there by Alexander the Great—called thunder and lightning, and magic; and it is well known that the use of ordnance has been in China above two thousand years. The conditions of weapons, and their improvements are **(1)** striking from a distance, for that outruns the danger, as it is seen in ordnance and muskets; **(2)** the strength of the percussion, in which ordnance exceed all uses of battering rams and ancient inventions; and **(3)** the commodious use of them, for example that they may serve in all weathers, that the carriage may be light and manageable, and the like.

For the conduct of the war: at the first, men relied extremely upon number; they put the wars likewise upon main force and valour, appointing days for pitched fields, and so trying it out upon an even match; and they were more ignorant in ranging and arraying their battles. In time they came to rely on competence rather than sheer numbers; and this led to their having advantages of place, cunning diversions, and the like, and they became grew skilful in the ordering of their battles.

In the youth of a state, arms do flourish; in the middle age of a state, learning; and then both of them together for a time; in the declining age of a state, mechanical arts and merchandise. Learning has its infancy when it is but beginning, and almost childish; then its youth, when it is luxuriant and juvenile; then its strength of years, when it is solid and reduced; and, lastly, its old age, when it grows dry and exhausted. But it is not good to look too long upon these turning wheels of vicissitude, lest we become giddy; as for the philology of them, that is but a circle of tales, and therefore not fit for this writing.