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Defoe Abbot Melville Montaigne Cooper Emerson Hugo
Stoker Wilde Christie Maupassant Haggard Chesterton Molière Eliot Grimm
Garnett Engels Byron Schiller
Goethe Hawthorne Smith Kafka
Cotton Dostoyevsky Hall
Baum Henry Kipling Doyle Willis
Leslie Dumas Flaubert Nietzsche Turgenev Balzac
Stockton Vatsyayana Crane
Burroughs Verne
Curtis Tocqueville Gogol Busch
Homer Tolstoy Whitman
Darwin Thoreau Twain
Potter Zola Lawrence Dickens Plato Scott
Kant Freud Jowett Stevenson Andersen Burton Harte
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**Discourses on a Sober and
Temperate Life Wherein is
demonstrated, by his own
Example, the Method of
Preserving Health to Extreme Old
Age**

Luigi Cornaro

Imprint

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DISCOURSES ON A SOBER AND TEMPERATE
LIFE.

By

LEWIS CORNARO, A NOBLE VENETIAN.

Wherein is demonstrated, by his own Example,

THE METHOD OF PRESERVING HEALTH TO EXTREME OLD
AGE.

Translated from the Italian Original.

A NEW EDITION, CORRECTED.

LONDON:

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M.DCC.LXXIX.

PREFACE

The author of the following discourses, Lewis Cornaro, was descended from one of the most illustrious families in Venice, but by the ill conduct of some of his relations, had the misfortune to be deprived of the dignity of a nobleman, and excluded from all honours and public employments in the state. Chagrined at this unmerited disgrace, he retired to Padua, and married a lady of the family of Spiltemberg, whose name was Veronica. Being in possession of a good estate, he was very desirous of having children; and after a long expectation of this happiness, his wife was delivered of a daughter, to whom he gave the name of Clara. This was his only child, who afterwards was married to John, the son of Fantini Cornaro, of a rich family in Cyprus, while that island belonged to the republic of Venice. Though he was far advanced in life when his daughter Clara came into the world, yet he lived to see her very old, and the mother of eight sons and three daughters. He was a man of sound understanding, determined courage and resolution. In his younger days, he had contracted infirmities by intemperance, and by indulging his too great propensity to anger; but when he perceived the ill consequence of his irregularities, he had command enough of himself to subdue his passion and inordinate appetites. By means of great sobriety, and a strict regimen in his diet, he recovered his health and vigour, which he preserved to an extreme old age. At a very advanced stage of life he wrote the following discourses, wherein he acquaints us with the irregularity of his youth, his reformation of manners, and the hopes he entertained of living a long time. Nor was he mistaken in his expectation, for he resigned his last breath without any agony, sitting in an elbow chair, being above an hundred years old. This happened at Padua, the 26th of April, 1566. His lady, almost as old as himself, survived him but a short time, and died an early death. They were both interred in St. Anthony's church, without pomp, pursuant to their testamentary directions.

These discourses, though written in Cornaro's old age, were penned at different times, and published separately: The first, which he wrote at the age of eighty-three, is intitled, A Treatise on a

Sober Life, in which he declares war against every kind of intemperance; and his vigorous old age speaks in favour of his precepts. The second treatise he composed at the age of eighty-six: it contains farther encomiums on sobriety, and points out the means of mending a bad constitution. He says, that he came into the world with a choleric disposition, but that his temperate way of life had enabled him to subdue it. The third, which he wrote at the age of ninety-one, is intitled, *An Earnest Exhortation to a Sober Life*; here he uses the strongest arguments to persuade mankind to embrace a temperate life, as the means of attaining a healthy and vigorous old age. The fourth and last, is a letter to Barbaro, Patriarch of Aquileia, written at the age of ninety-five; it contains a lively description of the healthy, vigour, and perfect use of all his faculties, which he had the happiness of enjoying at that advanced period of life.

This useful work was translated some years ago into English, under the title of *Sure and certain methods of attaining a long and healthy life*. The translator seems rather to have made use of a French version than of the Italian original; he has likewise omitted several passages of the Italian, and the whole is rather a paraphrase than a translation. This has induced us to give the public an exact and faithful version of that excellent performance, from the Venice edition in 8vo, in the year 1620 [1]: and as a proof of the merit and authenticity of the work, we beg leave to quote Mr. Addison's recommendation of it, SPECTATOR, Vol. iii, No 195.

"The most remarkable instance of the efficacy of temperance, towards the procuring long life, is what we meet with in a little book published by *Lewis Cornaro*, the *Venetian*; which I rather mention, because it is of undoubted credit, as the late *Venetian* ambassador, who was of the same family, attested more than once in conversation, when he resided in *England*. *Cornaro*, who was the author of the little treatise I am mentioning, was of an infirm constitution, till about forty, when, by obstinately persisting in an exact course of temperance, he recovered a perfect state of health; insomuch that at fourscore he published his book, which has been translated into *English* under the title of, *Sure and certain methods of attaining a long and healthy life*. He lived to give a third or fourth edition of it, and after having passed his hundredth year, died without pain or agony, and like one who falls asleep. The treatise I mention has been

taken notice of by several eminent authors, and is written with such spirit of chearfulness, religion, and good sense, as are the natural concomitants of temperance and sobriety. The mixture of the old man in it, is rather a recommendation than a discredit to it."

[1] The first edition was published by the author at Padua, in 4to, A.D. 1558.

A TREATISE ON A SOBER LIFE

It is a thing past all doubt, that custom, by time, becomes a second nature, forcing men to use that, whether good or bad, to which they have been habituated: nay, we see habit, in many things, get the better of reason. This is so undeniably true, that virtuous men, by conversing with the wicked, very often fall into the same vicious course of life. The contrary, likewise, we see sometimes happen; viz. that, as good morals easily change to bad, so bad morals change again to good. For instance: let a wicked man, who was once virtuous, keep company with a virtuous man, and he will again become virtuous; and this alteration can be attributed to nothing but the force of habit, which is, indeed, very great. Seeing many examples of this; and besides, considering that, in consequence of this great force of habit, three bad customs have got footing in Italy within a few years, even within my own memory; the first flattery and ceremoniousness: the second Lutheranism [2], which some have most preposterously embraced; the third intemperance; and that these three vices, like so many cruel monsters, leagued, as indeed they are, against mankind, have gradually prevailed so far, as to rob civil life of its sincerity, the soul of its piety, and the body of its health; I have resolved to treat of the last of these vices, and prove that it is an abuse, in order to extirpate it, if possible. As to the second, Lutheranism, and the first, flattery, I am certain, that some great genius or another will soon undertake the task of exposing their deformity, and effectually suppressing them. Therefore, I firmly hope, that, before I die, I shall see these three abuses conquered and driven out of Italy; and this country of course restored to its former laudable and virtuous customs.

[2] The author writes with the prejudice of a zealous Roman Catholic against the doctrine of the Reformation, which he here distinguishes by the name of Lutheranism. This was owing to the artifices of the Romish clergy in those days, by whom the reformed

religion was misinterpreted, as introductive of licentiousness and debauchery.

To come then to that abuse, of which I am proposed to speak, namely, intemperance; I say, that it is a great pity it should have prevailed so much, as entirely to banish sobriety. Though all are agreed, that intemperance is the offspring of gluttony, and sober living of abstemiousness; the former, nevertheless, is considered a virtue and a mark of distinction, and the latter, as dishonourable and the badge of avarice. Such mistaken notions are entirely owing to the power of custom, established by our senses and irregular appetites; these have blinded and besotted men to such a degree, that, leaving the paths of virtue, they have followed those of vice, which lead them before their time to an old age, burthened with strange and mortal infirmities, so as to render them quite decrepid before forty, contrary to the effects of sobriety, which, before it was banished by this destructive intemperance, used to keep men sound and hearty to the age of eighty and upwards. O wretched and unhappy Italy! do you not see, that intemperance murders every year more of your subjects, than you could lose by the most cruel plague, or by fire and sword in many battles? Those truly shameful feasts, no so much in fashion, and so intolerably profuse, that no tables are large enough to hold the dishes, which renders it necessary to heap them one upon another; those feasts, I say, are so many battles; and how is it possible to support nature by such a variety of contrary and unwholesome foods? Put a stop to this abuse, for God's sake, for there is not, I am certain of it, a vice more abominable than this in the eyes of the Divine Majesty. Drive away this new kind of death, and you have banished the plague, which, though it formerly used to make such havock, now does little or no mischief, owing to the laudable practice of attending more to the goodness of the provisions brought to our markets. There are means still left to banish intemperance, and such means too, that every man may have recourse to them without any assistance. Nothing more is requisite for this purpose, than to live up to the simplicity dictated by nature, which teaches us to be content with little, to pursue the medium of holy abstemiousness and divine reason, and to accustom ourselves to eat no more than is absolutely necessary to support life; consider-

ing, that what exceeds this, is disease and death, and merely gives the palate satisfaction, which, though but momentary, brings on the body a long and lasting train of disagreeable sensations and diseases, and at length destroys it along with the soul. How many friends of mine, men of the finest understanding and most amiable disposition, have I seen carried off by this plague in the flower of their youth? who, where they now living, would be an ornament to the public, whose company I should enjoy with as much pleasure, as I now feel concern at their loss.

In order, therefore, to put a stop to so great an evil, I have resolved by this short discourse to demonstrate, that intemperance is an abuse which may be easily removed, and that the good old sober living may be substituted in its stead; and this I undertake more readily, as many young men of the best understanding, knowing that it is a vice, have requested it of me, moved thereto by seeing their fathers drop off in the flower of their youth, and me so sound and hearty at the age of eighty-one. They expressed a desire to reach the same term, nature not forbidding us to wish for longevity; and old-age being, in fact, that time of life in which prudence can be best exercised, and the fruits of all the other virtues enjoyed with less opposition, the passions being then so subdued, that man gives himself up entirely to reason. They beseeched me to let them know the method pursued by me to attain it; and then finding them intent on so laudable a pursuit, I have resolved to treat of that method, in order to be of service not only to them, but to all those who may be willing to peruse this discourse. I shall, therefore, give my reasons for renouncing intemperance, and betaking myself to a sober course of life; declare freely the method pursued by me for that purpose; and then set forth the effects of so good an habit upon me; whence it may be clearly gathered, how easy it is to remove the abuse of intemperance. I shall conclude, by shewing how many conveniencies and blessings are the consequences of a sober life.

I say then, that the heavy train of infirmities, which had not only invaded, but even made great inroads in my constitution, were my motives for renouncing intemperance, to which I had been greatly addicted; so that, in consequence of it, and the badness of my constitution, my stomach being exceedingly cold and moist, I was fallen into different kinds of disorders, such as pains in my stomach, and

often stitches, and spices of the gout; attended by, what was still worse, an almost continual slow fever, a stomach generally out of order, and a perpetual thirst. From these natural and acquired disorders the best delivery I had to hope for, was death, to put an end to the pains and miseries of life; a period very remote in the regular course of nature, though I had hastened it by my irregular manner of living. Finding myself, therefore, in such unhappy circumstances between my thirty-fifth and fortieth year, every thing that could be thought of having been tried to no purpose to relieve me, the physicians gave me to understand, that there was but one method left to get the better of my complaints, provided I would resolve to use it, and patiently persevere in it. This was a sober and regular life, which the assured me would be still of the greatest service to me, and would be as powerful in its effects, as the intemperance and irregular one had been, in reducing me to the present low condition: and that I might be fully satisfied of its salutary effects, for though by my irregularities I was become infirm, I was not reduced so low, but that a temperate life, the opposite in every respect to an intemperate one, might still entirely recover me. And besides, it in fact appears, such a regular life, whilst observed, preserves men of a bad constitution, and far gone in years, just as a contrary course has the power to destroy those of the best constitution, and in their prime; for this plain reason, that different modes of life are attended by different effects; art following, even herein, the steps of nature, with equal power to correct natural vices and imperfections. This is obvious in husbandry and the like. They added, that if I did not immediately have recourse to such a regimen, I could receive no benefit from it in a few months, and that in a few more I must resign myself to death.

These solid and convincing arguments made such an impression on me, that, mortified as I was besides, by the thoughts of dying in the prime of life, and at the same time perpetually tormented by various diseases, I immediately concluded, that the foregoing contrary effects could not be produced but by contrary modes of living; and, therefore, full of hopes, resolved, in order to avoid at once both death and disease, to betake myself to a regular course of life. Having, upon this, enquired of them what rules I should follow, they told me, that I must not use any food, solid or liquid, but such as,

being generally prescribed to sick persons, is, for that reason, called diet, and both very sparingly. These directions, to say the truth, they had before given me; but it was at a time of life when, impatient of such restraint, and finding myself satiated, as it were, with such food, I could not put up with it, and therefore eat freely of every thing I liked best; and likewise, feeling myself in a manner parched up by the heat of my disease, made no scruple of drinking, and in large quantities, the wines that best pleased my palate. This indeed, like all other patients, I kept a secret from my physicians. But, when I had once resolved to live sparingly, and according to the dictates of reason, seeing that it was no difficult matter, nay, that it was my duty as a man so to do, I entered with so much resolution upon this new course of life, that nothing has been since able to divert me from it. The consequence was, that in a few days I began to perceive, that such a course agreed with me very well; and by pursuing it, in less than a year, I found myself (some persons, perhaps, will not believe it) entirely freed from all my complaints.

Having thus recovered my health, I began seriously to consider the power of temperance, and say to myself, that if this virtue had efficacy enough to subdue such grievous disorders as mine, it must have still greater to preserve me in health, to help my bad constitution, and comfort my very weak stomach. I therefore applied myself diligently to discover what kinds of food suited me best. But, first, I resolved to try, whether those, which pleased my palate, agreed or disagreed with my stomach, in order to judge for myself of the truth of that proverb, which I once held true, and is universally held as such in the highest degree, insomuch that epicures, who give a loose to their appetites, lay it down as a fundamental maxim. This proverb is, that whatever pleases the palate, must agree with the stomach, and nourish the body; or whatever is palatable must be equally wholesome and nourishing. The issue was, that I found it to be false: for, though rough and very cold wines, as likewise melons and other fruits, sallad, fish and pork, tarts, garden-stuff, pastry, and the like, were very pleasing to my palate, the disagreed with me notwithstanding. Having convinced myself, that the proverb in question was false, I look'd upon it as such; and, taught by experience, I gave over the use of such meats and wines, and likewise of ice; chose wine suited to my stomach, drinking of it but the quantity

I knew I could digest. I did the same by my meat, as well in regard to quantity as to quality, accustoming myself never to cloy my stomach with eating or drinking; but constantly rise from table with a disposition to eat and drink still more. In this I conformed to the proverb, which says, that a man, to consult his health, must check his appetite. Having in this manner, and for these reasons, conquered intemperance and irregularity, I betook myself intirely to a temperate and regular life: which effected in me the alteration already mentioned, that is, in less than a year it rid me of all those disorders, which had taken so deep a root in me; nay, as I have already observed, had made such a progress, as to be in a manner incurable. It had likewise this other good effect, that I no longer experienced those annual fits of sickness, with which I used to be afflicted, while I followed a different, that is a sensual, course of life; for then I used to be attacked every year with a strange kind of fever, which sometimes brought me to death's door. From this disease, then, I also freed myself, and became exceeding healthy, as I have continued from that time forward to this very day; and for no other reason than that I never trespassed against regularity, which by its infinite efficacy has been the cause, that the meat I constantly eat, and the wine I constantly drink, being such as agreed with my constitution, and taken in proper quantities, imparted all their virtue to my body, and then left it without difficulty, and without engendering in it any bad humours.

In consequence therfore of my taking such methods, I have always enjoyed, and (God be praised) actually enjoy, the best of healths. It is true, indeed, that, besides the two forgoing most important rules relative to eating and drinking, which I have ever been very scrupulous to observe; that is, not to take of any thing, but as much as my stomach can easily digest, and to use those things only, which agree with me; I have carefully avoided heat, cold, and extraordinary fatigue, interruption of my usual hours of rest, excessive venery, making any stay in bad air, and exposing myself to the wind and sun; for these, too, are great disorders. But then, fortunately, there is no great difficulty in avoiding them, the love of life and health having more sway over men of understanding, than any satisfaction they could find in doing what must be extremely hurtful to their constitution. I have likewise done all that lay in my pow-

er to avoid those evils, which we do not find so easy to remove; these are melancholy, hatred, and other violent passions, which appear to have the greatest influence over our bodies. However, I have not been able to guard so well against either one or the other kind of these disorders, as not to suffer myself now and then to be hurried away by many, not to say, all of them; but I have reaped the benefit of knowing by experience that these passions have, in the main, no great influence over bodies governed by the two foregoing rules of eating and drinking, and therefore can do them but very little harm; so that it may with great truth be affirmed, that whoever observes these two capital rules, is liable to very little inconveniency from any other excesses. This, Galen, who was an eminent physician, observed before me. He affirms, that so long as he followed these rules relative to eating and drinking, he suffered but little from other disorders, so little, that they never gave him above a day's uneasiness. That what he says is true, I am a living witness, and so are many others, who know me, and have seen, how often I have been exposed to heats and colds, and such other disagreeable changes of weather; and have, likewise, seen me (owing to various misfortunes, which have more than once befallen me) greatly disturbed my mind. For they can not only say of me, that such disturbance of mind has done me very little harm, but they can aver of many others, who did not lead a sober and regular life, that it proved very prejudicial to them, amongst whom was a brother of my own, and others of my family, who trusting to the goodness of their constitution, did not follow my way of living. The consequence hereof was a great misfortune to them, the perturbations of the mind having thereby acquired an extraordinary influence over their bodies. Such, in a word, was their grief and dejection at seeing me involved in expensive law-suits, commenced against my by great and powerful men, that, fearing I should be cast, they were seized with that melancholy humour, with which intemperate bodies always abound; and these humours had such an influence over them, and increased to such a degree, as to carry them off before their time; whereas I suffered nothing on the occasion, as I had in me no superfluous humours of that kind. Nay, in order to keep up my spirits, I brought myself to think, that God had raised up these suits against me, in order to make me more sensible of my strength of body and mind; and that I should get the better of them with

honour and advantage, as it, in fact, came to pass: for, at last, I obtained a decree exceeding favourable to my fortune and my character, which, though it gave me the highest pleasure, had not the power to do me any harm in other respects. Thus it is plain, that neither melancholy nor any other affection of the mind can hurt bodies governed with temperance and regularity.

But I must go a step further, and say, that even misfortunes themselves can do but very little mischief, or cause but very little pain, to such bodies; and that this is true, I have myself experienced at the age of seventy. I happened, as is often the case, to be in a coach, which going at a pretty smart rate, was upset, and in that condition drawn a considerable way by the horses, before means could be found to stop them; whence I received so many shocks and bruises, that I was taken out with my head and all the rest of my body terribly battered, and a dislocated leg and arm. When I was brought home, the family immediately sent for the physicians, who, on their arrival, seeing me in so bad a plight, concluded, that within three days I should die; nevertheless, they would try what good two things would do me; one was to bleed me, the other to purge me; and thereby prevent my humours altering, as they every moment expected, to such a degree, as to ferment greatly, and bring on a high fever. But I, on the contrary, who knew, that the sober life I had led for many years past, had so well united, harmonized, and disposed my humours, as not to leave it in their power to ferment to such a degree, refused to be either bled, or purged. I just caused my leg and arm to be set, and suffered myself to be rubbed with some oils, which they said were proper on the occasion. Thus, without using any other kind of remedy, I recovered, as I thought I should, without feeling the least alteration in myself, or any other bad effects from the accident; a thing, which appeared miraculous even in the eyes of the physicians. Hence we are to infer, that whoever leads a sober and regular life, and commits no excess in his diet, can suffer but very little from disorders of any other kind, or external accidents. On the contrary, I conclude, especially from the late trial I have had, that excesses in eating and drinking are fatal. Of this I convinced myself four years ago, when by the advice of my physicians, the instigation of my friends, and the importunity of my own family, I consented to such an excess, which, as it will appear here-

after, was attended with far worse consequences, than could naturally be expected. This excess consisted in increasing the quantity of food I generally made use of; which increase alone brought me to a most cruel fit of sickness. And as it is a case so much in point to the subject in hand, and the knowledge of it may be useful to some of my readers, I shall take the trouble to relate it.

I say, then, that my dearest friends and relations, actuated by the warm and laudable affection and regard they have for me, seeing how little I eat, represented to me, in conjunction with my physicians, that the sustenance I took could not be sufficient to support one so far advanced in years, when it was become necessary not only to preserve nature, but to increase its vigour. That, as this could not be done without food, it was absolutely incumbent upon me to eat a little more plentifully. I, on the other hand, produced my reasons for not complying with their desires. These were, that nature is content with little, and that with this little I had preserved myself so many years; and that, to me, the habit of it was become a second nature; and that it was more agreeable to reason, that, as I advanced in years and lost my strength, I should rather lessen than increase the quantity of my food: Farther, that it was but natural to think, that the powers of the stomach grew weaker from day to day; on which account I could see no reason to make such an addition. To corroborate my arguments, I alleged that those two natural and very true proverbs; one, that he, who has a mind to eat a great deal, must eat but little; which is said for no other reason than this, that eating little makes a man live very long, and living very long he must eat a great deal. The other proverb was, that what we leave after making a hearty meal, does us more good than what we have eat. But neither these proverbs, nor any other arguments I could think of, were able to prevent their teasing me more than ever. Wherefore, not to appear obstinate, or affect to know more than the physicians themselves; but, above all, to please my family, who very earnestly desired it, from a persuasion that such an addition to my usual allowance would preserve my strength, I consented to increase the quantity of food, but with two ounces only. So that, as before, what with bread, meat, the yolk of an egg, and soup, I eat as much, as weighed in all twelve ounces, neither more nor less, I now increased it to fourteen; and as before I drank but fourteen ounces

of wine, I now increased it to sixteen. This increase and irregularity, had, in eight days time, such an effect upon me, that, from being chearful and brisk, I began to be peevish and melancholy, so that nothing could please me; and was constantly so strangely disposed, that I neither knew what to say to others, nor what to do with myself. On the twelfth day, I was attacked with a most violent pain in my side, which held me twenty-two hours, and was succeeded by a terrible fever, which continued thirty-five days and as many nights, without giving me a moment's respite; though, to say the truth, it began to abate gradually on the fifteenth. But notwithstanding such abatement, I could not, during the whole time, sleep half a quarter of an hour together, insomuch that every one looked upon me as a dead man. But, God be praised, I recovered merely by my former regular course of life, though then in my seventy-eighth year, and in the coldest season of a very cold year, and reduced to a mere skeleton; and I am positive that it was the great regularity I had observed for so many years, and that only, which rescued me from the jaws of death. In all that time I never knew what sickness was, unless I may call by that same name some slight indispositions of a day or two's continuance; the regular life I had led, as I have already taken notice, for so many years, not having permitted any superfluous or bad humours to breed in me; or if they did, to acquire such strength and malignity, as they generally acquire in the superannuated bodies of those, who live without rule. And as there was not any old malignity in my humours (which is the thing that kills people) but only that, which my new irregularity had occasioned, this fit of sickness, though exceeding violent, had not the strength to destroy me. This it was, and nothing else, that saved my life; whence may be gathered, how great is the power and efficacy of regularity; and how great, likewise, is that of irregularity, which in a few days could bring on me so terrible a fit of sickness, just as regularity had preserved me in health for so many years.

And it appears to me a no weak argument, that, since the world, consisting of the four elements, is upheld by order; and our life, as to the body, is no other than a harmonious combination of the same four elements, so it should be preserved and maintained by the very same order; and, on the other hand, it must be worn out by sickness, or destroyed by death, which are produced by the contrary effects.

By order the arts are more easily learned; by order armies are rendered victorious; by order, in a word, families, cities, and even states are maintained. Hence I concluded, that orderly living is no other than a most certain cause and foundation of health and long life; nay I cannot help saying, that it is the only and true medicine; and whoever weighs the matter well, must also conclude, that this is really the case. Hence it is, that when a physician comes to visit a patient, the first thing he prescribes, is to live regularly. In like manner, when a physician takes leave of a patient, on his being recovered, he advises him, as he tenders his health, to lead a regular life. And it is not to be doubted, that, were a patient so recovered to live in that manner, he could never be sick again, as it removes every cause of illness; and so, for the future, would never want either physician or physic. Nay, by attending duly to what I have said, he would become his own physician, and, indeed, the best he could have; since, in fact, no many can be a perfect physician to any one but himself. The reason of which is, that any man may, by repeated trials, acquire a perfect knowledge of his own constitution, and the most hidden qualities of his body; and what wine and food agree with his stomach. Now, it is so far from being an easy matter to know these things perfectly of another, that we cannot without much trouble discover them in ourselves, since a great deal of time and repeated trials are requisite for the purpose.

These trials are, indeed, (if I may say it) more than necessary, as there is a greater variety in the natures and constitutions of different men, than in their persons. Who could believe, that old wine, wine that had passed its first year, should disagree with my stomach, and new wine agree with it? and that pepper, which is looked upon as a warm spice, should not have a warm effect upon me, insomuch that I find myself more warmed and comforted by cinnamon? Where is the physician, that could have informed me of these two latent qualities, since I myself, even by a long course of observation, could scarce discover them? From all these reasons it follows, that it is impossible to be a perfect physician to another. Since, therefore, a man cannot have a better physician than himself, nor any physic better than a regular life, a regular life he ought to embrace.

I do not, however, mean, that, for the knowledge and cure of such disorders, as often befall those who do not live regularly, there is no

occasion for a physician, and that his assistance ought to be slighted. For, if we are apt to receive such great comfort from friends, who come to visit us in our illness, though they do no more than testify their concern for us, and bid us be of good cheer; how much more regard ought we to have for the physician, who is a friend that comes to see us in order to relieve us, and promises us a cure? But for the bare purpose of keeping ourselves in good health, I am of the opinion, that we should consider as a physician this regular life, which, as we have seen, is our natural and proper physic, since it preserves men, even those of a bad constitution, in health; makes them live sound and hearty to the age of one hundred and upwards; and prevents their dying of sickness, or through a corruption of their humours, but merely by a dissolution of their radical moisture, when quite exhausted; all which effects several wise men have attributed to potable gold, and the elixir, sought for by many, but discovered by few. However to confess the truth, men, for the most part, are very sensual and intemperate, and love to satisfy their appetites, and to commit every excess; therefore, seeing that they cannot avoid being greatly injured by such excess, as often as they are guilty of it, they, by way of apologizing for their conduct, say, that it is better to live ten years less, and enjoy themselves; not considering, of what importance are ten years more of life, especially a healthy life, and at a maturer age; when men become sensible of their progress in knowledge and virtue, which cannot attain to any degree of perfection before this period of life.

Not to speak, at present, of many other advantages, I shall barely mention that in regard to letters and the sciences; far the greatest number of the best and most celebrated books extant, were written during that period of life, and those ten years, which some make it their business to undervalue, in order to give a loose to their appetites. Be that as it will, I would not act like them. I rather coveted to live these ten years, and, had I not done so, I should never have finished those tracts, which I have composed in consequence of my having been sound and hearty these ten years past; and which I have the pleasure to think will be of service to others. These sensualists add, that a regular life is such as no man can lead. To this I answer, Galen, who was so great a physician, led such a life, and chose it as the best physic. The same did Plato, Cicero, Isocrates,