

SURE AND CERTAIN  
METHODS  
OF  
ATTAINING  
A  
LONG AND HEALTHY LIFE,  
WITH MEANS OF CORRECTING A  
BAD CONSTITUTION.

WRITTEN BY  
LEWIS CORNARO,  
An Italian Nobleman, when he was near an  
HUNDRED Years of Age.

WITH A  
RECOMMENDATORY PREFACE,  
BY THE  
HON. JOSEPH ADDISON, Esq.

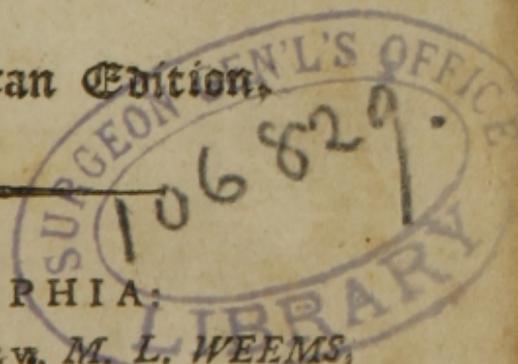
The First American Edition,

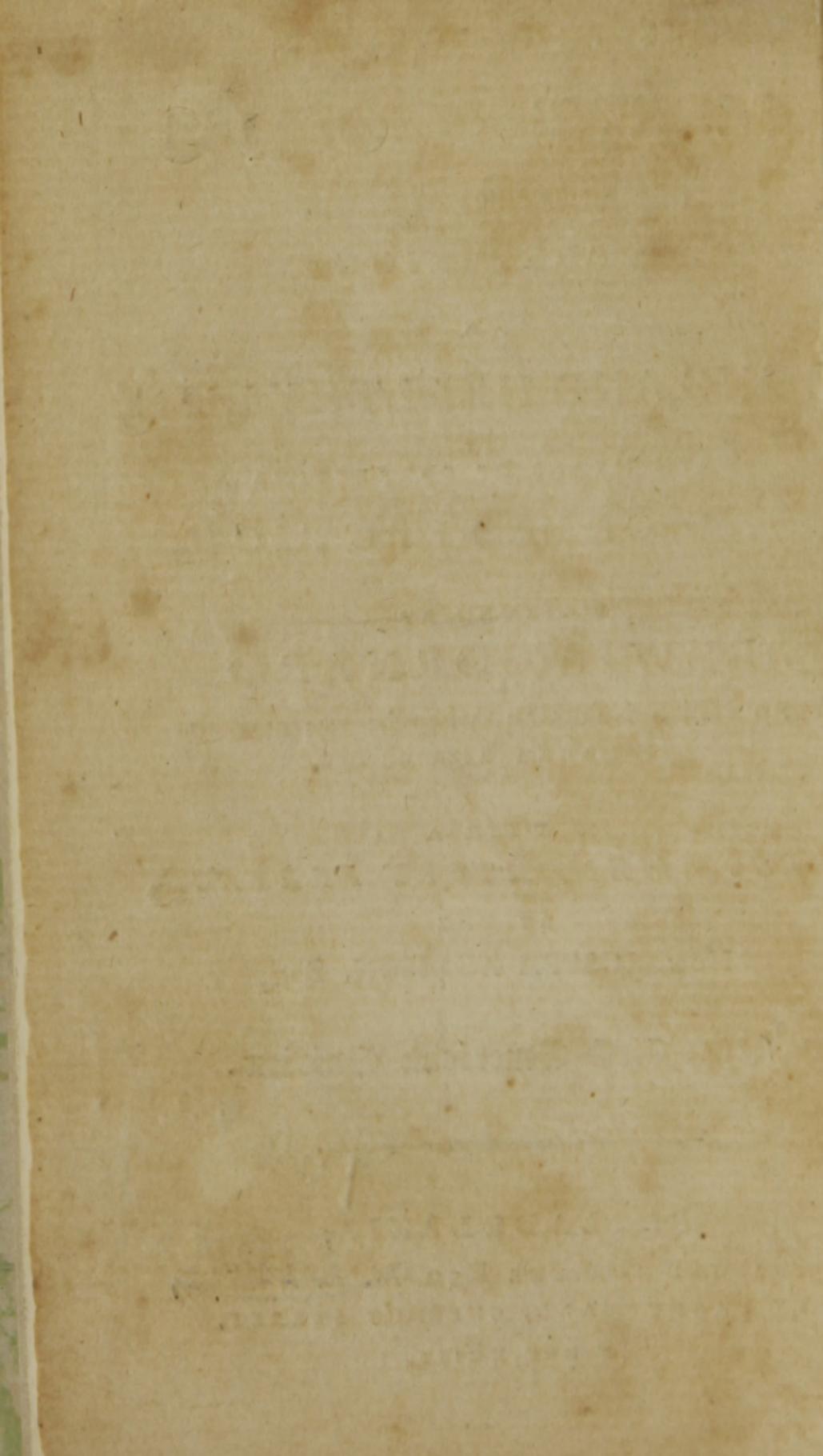
---

PHILADELPHIA:

REPRINTED FOR THE REV. M. L. WEEMS,  
BY PARRY HALL, CHESNUT STREET.

M.DCC.XCIII.





## PREFACE.

THE human body is certainly one of the most stupendous works of Omnipotence. Anatomy discovers in it ten thousand marks of wisdom and goodness, which I have no room to mention here ; nor indeed is it possible for any finite intelligence to describe the geometrical accuracy with which the Author of nature has formed every part of the fabric. However, as I sincerely wish that all who are honored with these curious and wonderfully wrought bodies, may possess them in health and happiness ; and, as  
long

long experience demonstrates, that this can not be attained without TEMPERANCE and EXERCISE, I shall in this paper give the reader such a view of the structure and mechanism of his own frame, as will convince him of the necessity and importance of those virtues.

I consider the body as a system of tubes and glands, or, (in a more rustic phrase) a large bundle of pipes and strainers; every part of the body, all the bowels, muscles, tendons and ligaments, are composed by a conjunction of countless numbers of these pipes and strainers, that is, of arteries, veins, nerves and glands. These innumerable vessels, disposed in proper order, and filled with  
suinta a

suitable fluids or juices, are, by divine appointment, to maintain, while life lasts, a continual action and motion.

The stomach and bowels are continually labouring to digest, that is, to grind and reduce the food into a kind of milk, called chyle; this, carried by millions of little pipes into the blood-vessels, is there, by the unceasing motion of the heart and arteries, converted into blood, and circulated throughout all parts of the body, to repair the constantly wearing solids, to recruit the ever wasting fluids, and to furnish a seasonable and friendly supply to the ceaseless consumption of nature.

From this sketch of the body and its laws, it plainly appears,

that two things are principally essential to good health—Sufficient strength of the vessels—and a free circulation of the fluids.

The vessels must have strength sufficient to convert the food into wholesome blood and urge it on with vigour; and the blood must have a proper consistence to yield to the action of the vessels and circulate freely. To preserve the body in this natural and healthy state, is an important task indeed, and which Infinite Wisdom has consigned chiefly to temperance and exercise. The one, allows us to take such food only as is wholesome and sufficient to supply the demands of nature; the other gives such firmness to the fibres

fibres as to enable them to digest and change the food into fit nourishment, and convey it to the different parts. And though the component parts of our bodies are so inconceivably numerous and complicated; though they are so very minute and delicate, yet so wonderful is the wisdom and goodness of God in the disposition of them, that they would seldom or never be disordered, were we but duly temperate and laborious. And without a proper regard to those great duties, the most sovereign medicines in nature will not have virtue sufficient to preserve us long in health. There is an anecdote related by some of the oriental writers, which places the importance of exercise in a proper

proper point of view. A king who had long languished under an ill habit of body, and had taken abundance of medicines to no purpose, was at length cured by the following method. His physician took an hollow ball of wood and filled it with drugs, after which he closed it up so artfully that nothing appeared. He likewise took a mall, and having hollowed it, he inclosed in it several drugs after the same manner as in the ball itself. He then ordered the king to exercise himself every morning with these instruments, till he should get into a moderate perspiration; when as the story goes, the virtue of the medicaments perspiring thro' the wood, had so good an influence

ence on the king's constitution, that they cured him of an indisposition which all the compositions he had taken inwardly had not been able to remove.

This allegory is finely contrived to shew us how beneficial bodily labour is to health, and that exercise is the best physic. But there is another grand preservative of health, I mean temperance, which may be practised by all ranks and conditions, at any season, or in any place, without interruption to business, expence of money, or loss of time. These two remedies, duly observed, will fortify the constitution and render it, in some sort, invulnerable. Exercise tends to throw off all superfluities, and temperance

to prevent them; exercise clears the vessels, temperance never overstrains them; exercise rolls on the vital current, temperance gives nature full play, and allows her to exert herself in all her force and vigour; exercise dissipates a growing distemper, temperance starves it.

Physic is hardly any thing else but the substitute of temperance or exercise. 'Tis indeed absolutely necessary in some distempers, but did men but live in an habitual use of those two great instruments of health, there would be but little occasion for it. Blistering, cupping and bleeding, emetics, diet-drinks and bitters, are seldom of use but to the intemperate and idle, who use them in order  
to

to make their luxury consistent with health. The apothecary and doctor are perpetually employed in countermining the cook and distiller. It is said of Diogenes, that meeting a young man who was going to a feast, he took him up in the street, and carried him home to his friends, as one who was running into imminent danger, had not he prevented him. What would that philosopher have said, had he been present at the gluttony of a modern meal? Would he not have thought the master of a family mad, had he seen him devour fowl, fish and flesh; swallow oil and vinegar, wines and spices; throw down sallads of twenty different herbs, sauces of an hundred ingredients, confections

confections and fruits of numberless sweets and flavors? What unnatural motions and counterferments must such a medley of intemperance produce in the body? For my part, when I behold a fashionable table set out in all its magnificence, I fancy that I see gouts and dropfies, fevers and lethargies, with other innumerable distempers, lying in ambuscade among the dishes.

Were I permitted to prescribe such a kind of temperance as would suit all persons, I would copy the following rules of a very eminent physician.

Make your whole repast out of one dish. If you indulge in a second, avoid drinking any thing

thing strong, till you have finished your meal; and abstain from all sauces, or at least such as are not the most plain and simple. A man would seldom be guilty of gluttony if he attended to these few and easy rules, prudently contenting himself with one good dish, he would not be in danger of excess, like those who indulge their craving appetites on every thing that is set before them. And by abstaining from hot sauces, and strong drinks, he would never feel those false appetites which often betray intemperate people to load their stomachs greatly to their hurt. And since it is to be feared, that the most temperate do sometimes err a little on the side of excess, a man

B

would

would do well to miss a meal now and then ; it would prove a great relief to nature, help her to cleanse and carry off her crudities, and give her time to recover the tones and springs of her distended vessels. Besides, abstinence well timed, often kills a sickness in the bud, and destroys the first seeds of an indisposition. Several eminent writers of antiquity tell us, that Socrates lived in Athens all the time of that dreadful plague which swept off so many thousands, and yet he never took the least infection ; which these writers unanimously ascribe to his temperate way of living.

And here I cannot but observe, that if we compare the lives of those ancient sages who  
were

were so eminent for their temperance, with the lives of any set of kings or great men of the same number, we should think they were of two different dates. For the generality of those wise men were nearer an hundred than sixty years of age at the time of their deaths. But the most remarkable instance of the efficacy of temperance towards procuring long life, is what we meet with in a little book published by Lewis Cornaro the Venetian; which I the 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, the author of the little treatise I am  
menti-

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, like one who falls asleep. The treatise I mention has been taken notice of by several eminent authors, and is written with such a spirit of chearfulness, religion, and good sense, as are the natural concomitants of

of

of temperance and sobriety.  
The mixture of the old man in  
it, is rather a recommendation  
than a discredit to it.



B 3

SURE



SURE AND CERTAIN  
METHODS  
OF  
ATTAINING  
A  
LONG AND HEALTHY LIFE.

---

CHAP. I.

I HAVE observed that custom has lately introduced into Italy, two very dangerous evils—FLATTERY and INTEMPERANCE.

The first of these banishes from conversation, all frankness and plain dealing. And against the latter I declare open war,

war, as being the most fatal enemy of our health.

'Tis an unhappiness into which the people of this age are fallen, that variety of dishes is become fashionable and too generally preferred to frugality. And yet the one is the offspring of divine temperance; whilst pride and gluttony are the odious parents of the other. Notwithstanding the difference of their origin, yet prodigality is now a-days tricked up in the pompous titles of magnificence, generosity and grandeur; whilst blest frugality is too often branded as the badge of an avaricious and sordid spirit.

This error has so far seduced us, as to prevail on many to renounce a frugal way of living, though

though taught by nature, from the earliest ages of the world; and has betrayed us into those excesses which serve only to abridge the number of our days. We are grown old before we have been able to taste the pleasures of being young. And the time which ought to be the summer of our lives is often the beginning of their winter. We soon perceive our strength to fail, and weakness to come on, long before we have attained to the perfection of our nature. On the contrary, temperance promotes and preserves to us the full perfection of our natures. Our youth is lasting, and our manhood attended with a vigor that does not begin to decay till after a great many years,

years. This is so true, that when men were not addicted to intemperance they had more strength and vivacity at fourscore, than we have at forty.

Oh unhappy Italy! dost thou not see, that gluttony and excess rob thee, every year, of more inhabitants than pestilence, war, and famine could have done? Thy true plagues, are thy numerous luxuries and immoderate feasting, in which thy deluded citizens indulge themselves to an excess unworthy of the rational character and utterly ruinous to their health; for how is it possible to support nature under such loads of contrary and unwholesome foods? Put a stop to this fatal abuse, for God's sake, for there is not,  
I am

I am certain of it, a vice more abominable in the eyes of the divine Majesty, nor any more destructive. How many have I seen cut off, in the flower of their days by this unhappy custom of high feeding! How many excellent friends has gluttony deprived me of, who, but for this accursed vice, might have been an ornament to the world, an honour to their country, and have afforded me as much joy in their lives, as I now feel concern at their loss!

In order, therefore, to put a stop to so great an evil, I have undertaken this little book, and I attempt it the more readily, as many young gentlemen have requested it of me, moved thereto by seeing their fathers drop  
off

off in the flower of their youth, and me so sound and hearty at the age of eighty-one. They begged me to let them know by what means I attained to such excellent health and spirits at my time of life. I could not but think their curiosity very laudable, and was willing to gratify them, and at the same time do some service to my countrymen, by declaring, in the first place, what led me to renounce intemperance and lead a temperate life; secondly, by shewing the rules I observed; and thirdly, what unspeakable satisfaction and advantage I derived from it; whence it may be very clearly seen how easy a thing it is for a wise man to escape all the curses of intemperance,

perance,

perance, and secure to himself the inestimable felicities of vigorous health and chearful age.

The first thing that led me to embrace a temperate life, was, the many and sore evils which I suffered from the contrary course of living; my constitution was, naturally, weakly and delicate, which ought in reason to have made me more regular and prudent, but being, like most young men, too fond of what is usually called good eating and drinking, I gave the rein to my appetites. In a little time I began to feel the ill effects of such intemperance; for I had scarce attained to my thirty-fifth year, before I was attacked with a complication of disorders, such as, head-achs, a  
c sick

sick stomach, cholicky uneasinesses, the gout, rheumatic pains, lingering fevers, and continual thirst; and though I was then but in the middle of my days, my constitution seemed so entirely ruined that I could hardly hope for any other termination to my sufferings but death.

The best physicians in Italy employed all their skill in my behalf, but to no effect. At last they told me, very candidly, that there was but one thing that could afford me a single ray of hope, but one medicine that could give a radical cure; viz. the immediate adoption of a temperate and regular life. They added moreover, that, now, I had no time to lose, that I must immediately, either  
chuse

chuse a regimen or death, and that if I deferred their advice much longer, it would be too late for ever to do it. This was a home thrust. I could not bear the thoughts of dying so soon, and being convinced of their abilities and experience, I thought the wisest course I could take, would be to follow their advice, how disagreeable soever it might seem.

I then requested my physicians to tell me exactly after what manner I ought to govern myself? To this they replied, that I should always consider myself as an infirm person; eat nothing but what agreed with me, and that in small quantity. I then immediately entered on this new course of life, and  
with

with so determined a resolution, that nothing has been since able to divert me from it. In a few days I perceived that this new way of living agreed very well with me; and in less than a twelve month I had the unspeakable happiness to find that all my late alarming symptoms were vanished, and that I was perfectly restored to health.

No sooner had I began to taste the sweets of this new resurrection, but I made many very pleasing reflections on the great advantages of temperance, and thought within myself, “if this  
“ virtue has had so divine an  
“ efficacy, as to cure me of such  
“ grievous disorders, surely it  
“ will help my bad constituti-  
“ on and confirm my health.”

I there,

I therefore applied myself diligently to discover what kinds of food were properest for me. I resolved to try whether those dishes that pleased my taste, were friendly or hurtful to my health, and whether the proverb be true, which says, *that what delights the palate must be good for the stomach.* I found it to be false; and that it just serves as an excuse to gluttons who are for indulging themselves in whatever pleases their appetites.

I therefore took no more notice of the proverb, but made choice of such meats and drinks as agreed with my constitution, and made it an inviolable law with myself, *always to rise with an appetite to eat more if I*

c 3

*pleased.*

*pleas'd*. In a word, I entirely renounced intemperance, and made a vow to continue the remainder of my life under the same regimen I had observed: A happy resolution this! the keeping of which entirely cured me of all my infirmities. I never before lived a year together, without falling once at least, into some violent illness: but this never happened to me afterwards; on the contrary, I have always been healthy ever since I was temperate.

I must not forget here to mention a circumstance of considerable consequence. I have been telling of a great, and to me, a most happy change in my way of living. Now all changes, though from the *worst* to the *best* habits,

habits, are, at first, disagreeable. I found it so; for having long accustomed myself to high feeding, I had contracted such a fondness for it, that though I was daily destroying myself, yet did it, at first, cost me some struggle to relinquish it. Nature, long used to hearty meals, expected them, and was quite dissatisfied with my moderate repasts. To divert my mind from these little dissatisfactions, I used immediately after dinner, to betake myself to some innocent amusement or useful pursuit, such as, my devotions, my book, music, &c.

But to return.—Besides the two foregoing important rules about eating and drinking, that is, not to take of any thing, but

as much as my stomach could easily digest, and to use those things only which agreed with me; I have very carefully avoided all *extremes* of *heat* and *cold*, excessive fatigue, interruption of my usual time of rest, *late hours*, and *too close* and *intense thinking*. All these are hurtful; but excessive fatigue, either of body or mind, is *eminently* so. Too close and intense thinking strains the nerves, wastes the spirits, brings on a painful head-ach, loss of appetite, prevents sleep, sours the temper, wastes the flesh, and, if long continued, effectually destroys the best constitution. Many an excellent constitution has been irrecoverably ruined by a few months only of too close  
hard

hard study ; and the ill effects of this imprudence, are greatly aggravated by that sedentary life, stooping posture, and leaning against tables, which studious people are so often guilty of, and by which they too frequently bring on themselves pains of the breast, and incurable consumptions. I am likewise greatly indebted for the excellent health I enjoy, to that calm and temperate state in which I have been careful to keep my passions.

The influence of the passions on the nerves, and health of our bodies, is so great, that none can possibly be ignorant of it. He therefore who seriously wishes to enjoy good health, must above all things, learn to conquer

quer his passions, and keep them in subjection to reason. For let a man be ever so temperate in diet, or regular in exercise, yet still some unhappy passion, if indulged to excess, will prevail over all his regularity, and prevent the good effects of his temperance ; no words, therefore, can adequately express the wisdom of guarding against an influence so destructive. Fear, anger, grief, envy, hatred, malice, revenge and despair, are known by eternal experience, to weaken the nerves, disorder the circulation, impair digestion, and often to bring on a long train of hysterical and hypochondriacal disorders ; and extreme sudden fright, has often occasioned immediate death.

On

On the other hand, moderate joy, and all those affections of the mind which partake of its nature, as chearfulness, contentment, hope, virtuous and mutual love, and courage in doing good, invigorate the nerves, give a healthy motion to the fluids, promote perspiration, and assist digestion; but violent anger, (which differs from madness only in duration) throws the whole frame into tempest and convulsion, the countenance blackens, the eyes glare, the mouth foams, and in place of the most gentle and amiable, it makes a man the most frightful and terrible of all animals. The effects of this dreadful passion do not stop here; it never fails to create bilious

lious, inflammatory, convulsive, and sometimes apoplectic disorders, and sudden death.

Solomon was thoroughly sensible of the destructive tendencies of uncontrolled passions, and has in many places cautioned us against them. He emphatically styles "envy a rottenness of the bones;" and says that, "wrath slayeth the angry man, and envy killeth the silly one\*;" and "that  
" the

\* The reader will I hope excuse me for relating the following tragical anecdote, to confirm what the benevolent Cornaro has said on the baneful effects of envy, &c.

In the city of York (England) there died some time ago, a young lady by the name of D—n. For five years before her death, she appeared to be lingering and melancholy. Her flesh withered away, her appetite decayed, her strength failed, her feet could no longer sustain her tottering emaciated body, and her dissolution seemed at hand. One day she called her intimate friends to her bed-side, and as well as she could, spoke to the following effect:

"I know



However, I must confess to my shame, that I have not been at all times so much of a philosopher and Christian, as entirely to avoid these disorders; but I have reaped the benefit of knowing by my own repeated experience, that these malignant passions have in general a far less pernicious effect on bodies that are rendered firm and vigorous by temperance, than on those that are corrupted and weakened by gluttony and excess.

That eminent physician, Galen, made this observation long before me, and I might produce several authorities to support this opinion, but I will go only upon my own experience. It was hard for me to avoid every extreme of heat and cold, and

to live above all the occasions of trouble which attend the life of man ; but yet these things made no great impression on the state of my health, though I met with many instances of persons who sunk under less weight both of body and mind.

There was in our family a considerable law-suit depending against some persons, whose might overcame our right. One of my brothers, and some of my relations, were so mortified and grieved on account of the loss of this suit, that they actually died of broken hearts. I was as sensible as they could be, of the great injustice done us, but, thank God, so far from breaking my heart, it scarcely broke my repose. And I ascribe *their* sufferings

sufferings and *my* safety, to the difference of our living. Intemperance and sloth had so weakened their nerves, and broken their spirits, that they easily sunk under the weight of misfortune. While temperance and active life had so invigorated my constitution, as to make me happily superior to the evils of this momentary life.

At seventy years of age, I had another experiment of the usefulness of my regimen. Some business of consequence calling me into the country, my coach-horses ran away with me; I was overset and dragged a long way before they could stop the horses. They took me out of the coach, with my head batter'd, a leg and an arm out of joint,

joint, and truly in a very lamentable condition. As soon as they had brought me home, they sent for the physicians, who did not expect I could live three days: however, they resolved upon letting me blood, to prevent the fever, which usually happens in such cases. I was so confident, that my regular life had prevented the contracting of any ill humours, that I opposed their prescription. I ordered them to dress my head, to set my leg and arm, to rub me with some specific oils proper for bruises; and, without any other remedies, I was soon cured, to the great astonishment of the physicians, and of all those who knew me.

I beg leave to relate one more anecdote, as an additional proof what an impenetrable shield temperance presents against the evils of life.

About five years ago, I was over-persuaded to a thing, which had like to have cost me dear. My relations, whom I love, and who have a real tendernefs for me ; my friends, with whom I was willing to comply in any thing that was reasonable ; lastly, my physicians, who were looked upon as the oracles of health, did all agree, that I eat too little ; that the nourishment I took was not sufficient for one of my years ; that I ought not only to support nature, but likewise to increase the vigor of it, by eating a little more than I did.

did. It was in vain for me to represent to them, that nature is content with a little; that with this little I had enjoyed excellent health so many years; 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, especially as the powers of the stomach must grow weaker from year to year. To strengthen my arguments, I urged those two natural and true proverbs; one, that he who would eat a great deal must eat but little; that is, eating little makes a man live long, and living long he must eat a great deal. The other  
pro-

proverb was, that what we leave, after making a hearty meal, does us more good than what we have eaten. But neither my proverbs nor arguments could silence their affectionate intreaties. Wherefore to please persons who were so dear to me, I consented to increase the quantity of food, but with two ounces only. So that, as before I had always taken but twelve ounces of solid food in the day, I now increased it to fourteen, and as before I drank but fourteen ounces of wine in the day, I now increased it to sixteen. This increase had in eight days time such an effect on me, that from being remarkably chearful and brisk, I began to be peevish and melancholy, and was constantly

stantly 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 followed by a violent fever which continued thirty five days, without giving me a moment's respite. However, GOD be praised, I recovered, though in my seventy eighth year, and in the coldest season of a very cold winter, and reduced to a mere skeleton, and I am positive, that, next to GOD, I am most indebted to temperance, for my recovery. O how great is the evil of intemperance, which could, in a few days bring on me so severe an illness, and how glorious

rious are the virtues of temperance, which could thus bear me up, and snatch me from the jaws of death! Order, my friends, order is every thing; by order, the arts are more easily learnt; by order, armies are rendered victorious; by order, families, cities and kingdoms are raised to honour and happiness; and order is the grand preservative of health and long life; nay, I cannot help saying it is the only and true medicine. Hence it is, that when a disinterested physician visits a patient, the first thing he prescribes, is to live regularly. And when he takes leave of his patient after recovery, he advises him, as he tenders his health, to lead a regular life. And were a patient,  
fo

so recovered, to live in that manner, he would hardly ever be sick again. This we may say for a certainty, that would all men but live regularly and temperately, there would not be a tenth of that sickness which now makes so many melancholy families, nor any occasion for a tenth part of those nauseous medicines, which they are now obliged to swallow in order to carry off those bad humours with which they have filled their bodies by overeating and drinking. — To say the truth, would every one of us but pay a becoming attention to the quantity and quality of what he eats and drinks, and carefully observe the effects it has upon him, he would soon become his own physician,

fician, and indeed the very best he could possibly have, for people's constitutions are as different as their faces; and it is impossible, in many very important instances, for the most skilful physicians to tell a man of observation, what would agree with his constitution so well as he knows himself. I am willing to allow that a physician may be sometimes necessary; since there are some disorders against which no human prudence can provide, and which affect us in such a manner as to deprive us of the power of helping ourselves; it is wrong then *wholly* to rely on nature; recourse should be had to some judicious physician, and in cases of danger, the sooner the better. But for the bare purpose

pose of preserving ourselves in good health, there needs no better physic than a temperate and regular life. It is a specific and natural medicine, which preserves the man, how tender soever his constitution be, and prolongs his life to above a hundred years, spares him the pain of a violent death, sends him quietly out of the world, when the radical moisture is quite spent, and which, in short, has all the properties that are fancied to be in potable gold, which a great many persons have sought after in vain.

But alas! most men suffer themselves to be seduced by the charms of a voluptuous life. They have not courage enough to deny their appetites; and be-

ing over-persuaded by their inclinations so far, as to think they cannot give up the gratification of them, without abridging too much of their pleasures, they devise arguments to persuade themselves, that it is more eligible to live ten years less, than to be upon the restraint, and deprived of whatever may gratify their appetites. Alas! they know not the value of ten years of healthy life, in an age when a man may enjoy the full use of his reason, and turn all his wisdom and experience to his own, and the advantage of the world. To instance only in the sciences. 'Tis certain that some of the most valuable books now extant, were written in those last ten years of their authors

thors lives, which some men pretend to undervalue; let fools and villains undervalue life, the world would lose nothing by them, die when they will. But it is a loss indeed, when *wise* and *good* men drop into the grave; ten years of life to men of that character, might prove an inestimable blessing to their families and country. Is such an one a priest only, in a little time he might become a bishop, and by living ten years longer, might render the most important services to the world by his active dissemination of virtue and piety. Is he the aged parent of a family, then though no longer equal to the toils of younger years, yet by his venerable presence and matured counsels,

counsels, he may contribute more to the harmony and happiness of his children, than all their labours put together. And so with all others, whether in church or state, army or navy, who are advanced in years, though not equal to the active exercises of youth, yet in consequence of their superior wisdom and experience, their lives may be of more service to their country, than the lives of thousands of citizens. Some, I know, are so unreasonable as to say that it is impossible to lead such a regular life. To this I answer, Galen, that great physician, led such a life, and advised others to it as the best-physic. *Plato, Cicero, Isocrates,* and a great many famous men  
of

of past ages embraced it ; and in our time, Pope *Paul Farnese*, Cardinal *Bembo*, and two of our Doges, *Lando* and *Dorato*, have practised it, and thereby arrived to an extreme old age. I might instance in others of a meaner extract ; but, having followed this rule myself, I think I cannot produce a more convincing proof of its being practicable, and that the greatest trouble to be met with therein, is the first resolving and entering upon such a course of life.

You will tell me that *Plato*, as sober a man as he was, yet affirmed, that it is difficult for a man in public life to live so temperately, being often in the service of the state, exposed to the badness of weather, to the

E 3                      fatigues

fatigues of travelling, and to eat whatever he can meet with. This cannot be denied; but then I maintain, that these things will never hasten a man's death, provided he accustoms himself to a frugal way of living. There is no man, in what condition soever but may keep from over-eating; and thereby happily prevent those distempers that are caused by excess. They who have the charge of public affairs committed to their trust, are more obliged to it than any others: where there is no glory to be got for their country, they ought not to sacrifice themselves: they should preserve themselves to serve it; and if they pursue my method, it is certain they would ward off the distempers  
which

which heat and cold and fatigues might bring upon them; or should they be disturbed with them it would be but very lightly.

It may likewise be objected, that if one who is well, is dieted like one that is sick, he will be at a loss about the choice of his diet, when any distemper comes upon him. To this I say, that nature, ever attentive to the preservation of her children, teaches us how we ought to govern ourselves in such a case. She begins by depriving us so entirely of our appetites, that we can eat little or nothing. At that time, whether the sick person has been sober or intemperate, no other food ought to be used, but such as is proper  
for

for his condition; such as broth, jellies, cordials, barley-water, &c. When his recovery will permit him to use a more solid nourishment, he must take less than he was used to before his sickness; and notwithstanding the eagerness of his appetite, he must take care of his stomach, till he is perfectly cured. Should he do otherwise, he would overburden nature, and infallibly relapse into the danger he had escaped. But notwithstanding this, I dare aver, that he who leads a sober and regular life, will hardly ever be sick; or but seldom, and for a short time. This way of living preserves us from those bad humours which occasion our infirmities, and by  
confe-

consequence heals us of all those distempers which they occasion. I do not pretend to say that every body must eat exactly as little as I do, or abstain from fruit, fish, and other things from which I abstain, because such dishes disagree with me. They who are not disordered by such dishes, are under no obligation to abstain from them. But they are under the greatest obligations to feed moderately, even on the most innocent food, since an overloaded stomach cannot digest.

It signifies nothing to tell me that there are several, who, though they live very irregularly, yet enjoy excellent health and spirits, and to as advanced  
an

an age, as those who live ever so soberly. For this argument is founded on such uncertainty and hazard, and occurs so seldom, as to look more like a miracle than the regular work of nature. And those, who, on the credit of their youth and *constitution*, will pay any regard to so idle an objection, may depend on it that they are the betrayers and ruiners of their own health.

And I can confidently and truly affirm, that an old man, even of a bad constitution, who leads a regular and sober life, is surer of a longer one, than a young man of the best constitution who lives disorderly. All therefore who have a mind to live long and healthy,  
and

and die without sickness of body or mind, must immediately begin to live temperately, for such a regularity keeps the humours of the body mild and sweet, and suffers no gross fiery vapours to ascend from the stomach to the head; hence the brain of him who lives in that manner, enjoys such a constant serenity, that he is always perfectly master of himself. Happily freed from the tyranny of bodily appetites and passions, he easily soars above, to the exalted and delightful contemplation of heavenly objects; by this means his mind becomes gradually enlightened with divine truth, and expands itself to the glorious enrapturing view of the Power, Wisdom,  
and

and Goodness of the Almighty.—He then descends to nature, and acknowledges her for the fair daughter of GOD, and views her varied charms with sentiments of admiration, joy, and gratitude, becoming the most favoured of all sublunary beings. He then clearly discerns, and generously laments the wretched fate of those, who will not give themselves the trouble to subdue their passions, and those three most ensnaring lusts, the lust of the flesh, the lust of honours, and the lust of riches, which all wise and good men have firmly opposed and conquered, when they passed through this mortal state; for knowing such passions to be inconsistent with reason and happiness,

piners, they at once nobly broke through their snares, and applied themselves to virtue and good works, and so, became men of good and sober lives. And when in process of time, and after a long series of years, they see the period of their days drawing nigh, they are neither grieved nor alarmed. Full of acknowledgments for the favours already received from God, they throw themselves into the arms of his future mercy. They are not afraid of those dreadful punishments, which they deserve who have shortened their days by guilty intemperance. They die without complaining, sensible that they did not come into this world to stay for ever,

but are pilgrims and travellers to a far better. Exulting in this faith, and with hopes big with immortality, they go down to the grave in a good old age, enriched with virtues, and laden with honours.

And they have the greater reason not to be dejected at the thought of death, as they know it will not be violent, feverish or painful. Their end is calm, and they expire, like a lamp when the oil is spent, without convulsion or agony, and so they pass gently away, without pain or sickness, from this earthly and corruptible to that celestial and eternal life, whose happiness is the reward of the virtuous.

O holy,

O holy, happy, and thrice blessed temperance! how worthy art thou of our highest esteem! and how infinitely art thou preferable to an irregular and disorderly life! Nay, would men but consider the effects and consequences of both, they would immediately see, that there is as wide a difference between them, as there is betwixt light and darkness, heaven and hell.

Having thus given the reasons, which made me abandon an intemperate, and embrace a sober life, as also the method I observed, and the great blessings and advantages I reaped from it, I shall now direct my discourse to those, who suppose it to be no benefit to grow old;  
because

because they fancy, that when a man is past seventy, his life is nothing but weakness, infirmity, and misery. But I can assure these gentlemen, they are mightily mistaken; and that I find myself, old as I am, (which is much beyond what they speak of) to be in the most pleasant and delightful stage of life.

To prove that I have reason for what I say, they need only enquire how I spend my time, what are my usual employments; and to hear the testimony of all those that know me. They unanimously testify, that the life I lead, is not a dead and languishing life, but as happy a one as can be wished for in this world.

They

They will tell you, that I am still so strong at fourscore and three, as to mount a horse without any help or advantage of situation; that I can not only go up a single flight of stairs, but climb a hill from bottom to top, a-foot, and with the greatest ease; that I am always merry, always pleased, always in humour; maintaining a happy peace in my own mind, the sweetness and serenity whereof appear at all times in my countenance.

Besides, they know that 'tis in my power to pass away the time very pleasantly; having nothing to hinder me from tasting all the pleasures of an agreeable society, with several persons of parts and worth. When

I am willing to be alone, I read good books, and sometimes fall to writing; seeking always an occasion of being useful to the public, and doing service to private persons, as far as possible. I do all this without the least trouble; and in such times as I set apart for these employments.

I dwell in a house, which besides its being situated in the pleasantest part of *Padua*, may be looked on as the most convenient and agreeable mansion in that city. I there make me apartments proper for the winter and summer, which serve as a shelter to defend me from the extreme heat of the one, and the rigid coldness of the other. I walk out in my gardens, along my canals and walks; where I  
always

always meet with some little thing or other to do, which, at the same time, employs and amuses me.

I spend the months of *April*, *May*, *September*, and *October*, at my country-house, which is the finest situation imaginable: the air of it is good, the avenues neat, the gardens magnificent, the waters clear and plentiful; and this seat may well pass for an enchanted palace.

Sometimes I take a walk to my *Villa*, all whose streets terminate at a large square; in the midst of which is a pretty neat church, and large enough for the bigness of the parish.

Through this *Villa* runs a rivulet; and the country about it is enriched with fruitful and well

well cultivated fields; having at present a considerable number of inhabitants. This was not so formerly: It was a marshy place, and the air so unwholesome, that it was more proper for frogs and toads, than for men to dwell in. But on my draining off the waters, the air mended, and people resorted to it so fast, as to render the place very populous; so that I may, with truth, say that I have here dedicated to the LORD, a church, altars, and hearts to worship him; a circumstance this, which affords me infinite satisfaction as often as I reflect on it.

It is with great satisfaction that I see the end of a work of such importance to this STATE,  
I mean

I mean that of draining and improving so many large tracts of uncultivated ground, a work which I never expected to have seen compleated, but, thank GOD, I have lived to see it, and was even in person in these marshy places, along with the commissaries, for two months together, during the heats of summer, without ever finding myself the worse for the fatigues I underwent. Of such wonderful efficacy is that temperate life which I constantly observe.

If in discoursing on so important a subject as this, it be allowable to speak of trifles, I might tell you that at the age of fourscore and three, a temperate life had preserved me in  
that

that sprightlinefs of thought, and gaiety of humour, as to be able to compofe a very entertaining comedy, highly moral and instructive, without fhocking or difguffing the audience; an evil too generally attending our comedies, and which it is the duty, and will be the eternal honour of the magiftracy to difcountenance and fupprefs, fince nothing has a more fatal tendency to corrupt the morals of youth, than fuch plays as abound with wanton allufions, and wicked sneers and fcoffs on religion and matrimony.

As an addition to my happinefs, I fee myfelf immortalized as it were, by the great number of my defcendants. I meet with, on my return home, not only

two or three, but eleven grand children, all blest with high health, sweet dispositions, bright parts, and of promising hopes. I take a delight in playing with the little pratlers; those who are older I often set to sing and play for me on instruments of musick.—Call you this an infirm crazy old age, as they pretend, who say, that a man is but half alive after he is seventy? They may believe me if they please, but really I would not exchange my serene chearful old age, with any of those young men, even of the best constitution, who give the loose to their appetites; knowing as I do, that they are thereby subjecting themselves every moment to disease and death. I re-

I remember all the follies of which I was guilty in my younger days, and am perfectly sensible of the many and great dangers, they exposed me to. I know with what violence young persons are carried away by the heat of their blood. They presume on their strength, just as if they had taken a sure lease of their lives: and must gratify their appetites whatever it cost them, without considering that they thereby feed those ill humours, which do most assuredly hasten the approach of *sickness* and *death*; two evils, which of all others are the most unwelcome and terrible to the wicked. The first of these, *sickness*, is highly unwelcome, because it effectually stops their career

career after this world's business and pleasures, which being their sole delight and happiness, must be inexpressibly sad and mortifying. And the impatience and gloom of sickness is rendered tenfold more insupportable to them, because it finds them utterly destitute of those pious affections, which alone can soothe the severity of sickness and charm the pangs of pain. They had never cultivated an acquaintance with God, nor accustomed themselves to look up to him as to a merciful Father, who sends affliction to wean us from this scene of vanity. They had never, by prayers and good works, endeavoured to secure his friendship, or cherish that love which would make his dispensations

welcome. So that unblest with these divine consolations, the season of sickness must be dark and melancholy indeed: and besides all this, their hearts often sink within them at the prospect of DEATH, that ghastly king of terrors, who comes to cut them off from all their dear delights in this world, and send their unwilling souls to suffer the punishment which their own guilty conscience tells them is due to their wicked lives.

But from these two evils, so dreadful to many, blessed be GOD, I have but little to fear; for, as for *death*, I have a joyful hope that that change, come when it may, will be gloriously for the *better*; and besides, I trust that HE whose divine voice  
I have

I have so long obeyed, will graciously support and comfort his aged servant in that trying hour. And as for *sickness*, I feel but little apprehension on that account, since by my divine medicine TEMPERANCE, I have removed all the causes of illness; so that I am pretty sure I shall never be sick, except it be from some intent of *Divine* mercy, and then I hope I shall bear it without a murmur, and find it for my good. Nay, I have reason to think that my soul has so agreeable a dwelling in my body, finding nothing in it but peace and harmony between my reason and senses, that she is very well pleased with her present situation; so that I trust I have still a great many years to  
live

live in health and spirits, and enjoy this beautiful world, which is indeed beautiful to those who know how to make it so, as I have done, and likewise expect (with God's assistance) to be able to do in the next.

Now since a regular life is so happy, and its blessings so permanent and great, all I have still left to do, (since I cannot accomplish my wishes by force) is to beseech every man of sound understanding to embrace, with open arms, this most valuable treasure of a long and healthy life; a treasure, which, as it far exceeds all the riches of this world, so it deserves above all things to be diligently sought after, and carefully preserved. This is that divine sobriety, so agree-

agreeable to the Deity, the friend of nature, the daughter of reason and the sister of all the virtues. From her, as from their proper root, spring life, health, cheerfulness, industry, learning, and all those employments worthy of noble and generous minds. Excess, intemperance, superfluous humours, fevers, pains, gouts, dropfies, consumptions, and the dangers of death, vanish, in her presence, like clouds before the sun. She is the best friend and safest guardian of life; as well of the rich as of the poor; of the male as of the female sex; the old as of the young. She teaches the rich, modesty; the poor, frugality; men, continence; women, chastity; the old, how to ward off the attacks

of death; and bestows on youth, firmer and securer hopes of life. She preserves the senses clear, the body light, the understanding lively, the soul brisk, the memory tenacious, our motions free, and all our faculties in a pleasing and agreeable harmony.

O most innocent and divine sobriety! the sole refreshment of nature, the nursing mother of life, the true physic of soul as well as of body. How ought men to praise thee for thy princely gifts, for thy incomparable blessings! But as no man is able to write a sufficient panegyric on this rare and excellent virtue, I shall put an end to this discourse, lest I should be charged with excess in dwelling so long on so pleasing a subject. Yet

as numberless things may still be said of it, I leave off, with an intention to set forth the rest of its praises at a more convenient opportunity.

---

## CHAP II.

*The method of correcting a bad Constitution.*

**M**Y treatise on a temperate life has, thank God, begun to answer my wishes, in being of service to many persons of weakly constitutions, who, after every the least excess, found themselves greatly indisposed. These gentlemen, on seeing the foregoing treatise, have immediately betaken themselves to a regular

regular course of living, from which, as their numerous letters to me declare, they have experienced the happiest effects. In like manner, I should be glad to be of service to those who are born with good constitutions, but presuming too much upon them lead disorderly lives; whence it comes to pass, that on attaining the age of sixty or thereabouts, they are attacked with various diseases; some with constant cholicky pains, the tone of the stomach and bowels being in a manner destroyed by long continued excess; others are tormented with the gout, some are oppressed and drowned under dropfical humours, and others worn away to skeletons by the agonies of the stone, hec-  
tical

tical coughs, and a thousand other mortal diseases.

I was born with a very choleric, hasty disposition; flew into a passion for the least trifle, huffed every body about me, and was so intolerably disagreeable, that many persons of gentle manners absolutely shunned my company. On discovering how great an injury I was doing myself, I at once resolved to make this vile temper give way to reason. I considered that a man overcome by passion, must at times, be no better than a madman, and that the only difference between a passionate and a madman, is, that the one has lost his reason for ever, and the other is deprived of it by fits only; but that in one of these, though  
never

never so short, he may do some deed of cruelty or death, that will ruin his character, and destroy his peace *for ever*. A sober life, by cooling the fever of the blood, contributed much to cure me of this frenzy ; and I am now become so moderate, and so much a master of my passion, that nobody could perceive that it was born with me.

A man may likewise, by temperance and exercise, correct a bad constitution, and, notwithstanding a delicate habit, may live a long time in good health.

It is true indeed, the most temperate may sometimes be indisposed, but then they have the pleasure to think that it is not the effect of their own vices ; that it will be but moderate

derate in its *degree*, and of short continuance.

Many have said to me, “*How can you, when at a table covered with a dozen delicious dishes—how can you possibly content yourself with one dish, and that the plainest too at the table? It must surely be a great mortification to you, to see so many charming things before you, and yet scarcely taste them.*” This question has frequently been put to me, and with an air of surprize. I confess it has often made me unhappy; for it proves that such persons are got to such a pass, as to look on the gratification of their appetites as the highest happiness, not considering that the mind is properly the man, and that it is in the  
affections

affections of a virtuous and pious mind, a man is to look for his truest and highest happiness. When I sit down, with my eleven grand children, to a table covered with various dainties, of which, for the sake of a light easy stomach, I may not, at times, chuse to partake, yet this is no mortification to me; on the contrary, I often find myself most happy at these times. How can it otherwise than give me great delight when I think of that goodness of GOD, which blesses the earth with such immense stores of good things for the use of mankind; and which, over and above all this goodness, has put me into the way of getting such an abundance of them for my  
dear

dear grand children ; and, besides must it not make me very happy to think that I have gotten such a mastery over myself as never to abuse any of those good things, but am perfectly contented with such a portion of them as keeps me always in good health. O what a triumph of joy is this to my heart ! What a sad thing it is that young people will not take instruction, nor get benefit from those who are older and wiser than themselves ! I may use, in this matter, the words of the wise man, “ I have seen all things that are done under the sun.” I know the pleasures of eating, and I know the joys of a virtuous mind, and can say from long experience, that the

one excelleth the other as far as light excelleth darknes; the one are the pleasures of a mere animal, the other those of an angel.

Some are so thoughtless as to say, that they had rather be afflicted twice or thrice a year with the gout, the sciatic, and other chronic distempers, than deny themselves the pleasure of eating and drinking to the full of such things as they like. Such persons would do well to consider, that by adopting a temperate and active life, they might soon recover such vigour of constitution, as in a great measure, if not entirely, to throw off those painful diseases, and live in health and chearfulness to a fine old age. Whereas by continu-  
ing

ing the imprudent practice of high living\*, they keep up the feverish heat of the blood, relax their nerves, and so rivet on themselves those inflammatory wasting distempers, which will soon carry them to their graves.

To this some are ready to reply, that for their part they had rather eat and drink as they like, though it should shorten their lives, that is, “give them a short life and a merry one.” It is really a surprising and *sad* thing, to see reasonable creatures, so ready to swallow the most dangerous absurdities. For how, in the name of common sense, can the life of a glutton or a sot be

\* I would have it carefully remembered, that those who have been long *afflicted* with the gout, should consult some very experienced Physician, before they make any great change from high living to abstemiousness.

be a merry one? If men could eat to excess, drink to filliness, and rust in sloth, and after all, suffer no other harm than the abridgement of ten or a dozen years of life, they might have some little excuse for calling it a merry life, though surely it could appear so to none but persons of a sadly vitiated taste. But since high living does so certainly tend to oppress and weaken the stomach, filling the whole habit with superfluous and disordered humours, head-achs, disordered stomach, indigestion, disturbed sleep, bad dreams, disagreeable taste in the mouth in the morning, loss of appetite, eructations, sick stomach, vomitings, diarrhœas, fevers, rheumatisms, gouts, consumptions, apoplex-

apoplexies, &c. &c. I say, since an intemperate life will assuredly sow in our bodies the seeds of such diseases as will after a few short years of feverish pleasure, make life a burden to us, with what face can any reasonable being call this a merry life?

O sacred and most bountiful Temperance! how greatly am I indebted to thee for rescuing me from such fatal delusions; and for bringing me, through the divine benediction, to the enjoyment of so many felicities, and which, over and above all these favours conferred on thine old man, hast so strengthened his stomach, that he has now a better relish for his dry bread than he had formerly for the most exquisite dainties, so that,

by eating little, my stomach is often craving after the manna, which I sometimes feast on with so much pleasure, that I should think I trespassed on the duty of temperance, did I not know that one must eat, to support life; and that one cannot use a plainer or more natural diet.

My spirits are not injured by what I eat, they are only revived and supported by it. I can, immediately on rising from table, set myself to write or study, and never find that this application, though so hurtful to hearty feeders, does me any harm; and, besides, I never find myself drowsy after dinner, as a great many do;—the reason is, I feed so temperately, as never to load my stomach nor oppress

press my nerves, so that I am always as light, active, and chearful after meals as before.

O what a differencc there is between a temperate and an intemperate life! The one bestows health and long life, the other brings on disease and untimely death. O thou vile wicked intemperance, my sworn enemy, who art good for nothing but to murder those who follow thee; how many of my dearest friends hast thou robbed me of, in consequence of their not believing me! But thou hast not been able to destroy me according to thy wicked intent and purpose. I am still alive in spite of thee, and have attained to such an age, as to see around me eleven dear grand children, all of fine under-

understandings, and amiable dispositions, all given to learning and virtue ; all beautiful in their persons and lovely in their manners, whom, had I not abandoned thee thou infamous source of corruption, I should never have had the pleasure to behold. Nor should I enjoy those beautiful and convenient apartments which I have built from the ground, with such highly improved gardens, as required no small time to attain their present perfection. No, thou accursed hag, thy nature is to impoverish and destroy those who follow thee. How many wretched orphans have I seen embracing dunghills ; how many miserable mothers, with their helpless infants, crying for bread, while

while their deluded fathers, slaves to thy devouring lusts, were wasting their substance in rioting and drunkenness !

But thou art not content with consuming the substance, thou wouldest destroy the very families of those who are so mad as to obey thee. The temperate poor man who labours hard all day, can boast a numerous family of rosy cheeked children, while thy pampered slaves, sunk in ease and luxury, often languish without an heir to their ample fortunes. But since thou art so pestilential a vice, as to poison and destroy the greatest part of mankind, I am determined to use my utmost endeavours to extirpate thee, at least in part. And I promise myself, that my dear  
grand

grand children will declare eternal war against thee, and, following my example, will let the world see the blessedness of a temperate life, and so expose thee, O cruel intemperance! for what thou really art, a most wicked, desperate, and mortal enemy of the children of men.

It is really a very surprising and sad thing, to see persons grown to men's estate, and of fine wit, yet unable to govern their appetites, but tamely submitting to be dragged by them into such excesses of eating and drinking, as not only to ruin the best constitutions, and shorten their lives, but eclipse the lustre of the brightest parts, and bury themselves in utter contempt and uselessness. O what promising hopes have  
have

have been shipwrecked, what immortal honours have been sacrificed at the shrine of low sensuality! Happy, thrice happy, those who have early been inured to habits of self-denial, and taught to consider the gratification of their appetites as the unfailing source of diseases and death. Ye generous parents who long to see your children adorned with virtue, and beloved as the benefactors of their kind; O teach them the unspeakable worth of self-government. Unsupported by this, every advantage of education and opportunity will avail them but little: though the history of ancient worthies, and the recital of their illustrious deeds, may at times kindle up in their bosoms a  
flame

flame of glorious emulation, yet alas! this glow of coveted virtue, this flush of promised honor, is transient as a gleam of winter sunshine; soon overspread and obscured by the dark clouds of sensuality.

---

### CHAP. III.

*A Letter from Signior Lewis Cornaro to the Right Reverend Barbaro, Patriarch of Aquileia.*

My Lord,

**T**HE human understanding must certainly possess something divine in its nature. What thanks do we not owe to the divine goodness, for this wonderful faculty of our minds, where-  
by.

by we can, though never so distant from them, indulge the pleasure of seeing and conversing with those we love! How glorious is this invention of writing, whereby we can easily communicate to our absent friends, whatever may afford them pleasure or improvement! By means of this most welcome contrivance, I shall now endeavour to entertain you with matters of the greatest moment. It is true indeed, that what I have to tell you is no news,—but I never told it you at the age of *ninety one*. Is it not a charming thing, that I am able to tell you, that my health and strength are in so excellent a state, that instead of diminishing with my age, they seem to increase as I grow old?

All my acquaintance are surpris-  
ed at it; but I, who know the  
cause of this singular happiness,  
do every where declare it. I en-  
deavour, as much as in me lies,  
to convince all mankind, that a  
man may enjoy a paradise on earth  
even after the age of fourscore.

Now, my Lord, I must tell  
you, that within these few days  
past, several learned Doctors of  
this University came to be in-  
formed by me, of the method I  
take in my diet, having under-  
stood that I am still healthful and  
strong; that I have my senses  
perfect; that my memory, my  
heart, my judgment, the tone  
of my voice, and my teeth, are  
all as sound as in my youth; that  
I write seven or eight hours a  
day with my hand, and spend  
the

the rest of the day in walking out a-foot, and in taking all the innocent pleasures that are allowed to a virtuous man ; even music itself, in which I bear my part.

Ah, Sir ! how sweet a voice would you perceive mine to be, were you to hear me, like another *David*, chant forth the praises of GOD to the sound of my Lyre ! You would certainly be surprized and charmed with the harmony which I make. Those gentlemen particularly admired, with what easiness I write on subjects that require both judgment and spirit.

They told me, that I ought not to be looked on as an old man, since all my employments were such as were proper for a youth,

youth, and did by no means resemble the works of men advanced in years ; who are capable of doing nothing after fourscore, but loaded with infirmities and distempers, are perpetually languishing in pain.

That if there be any of them less infirm, yet their senses are decayed ; their sight and hearing fails them, their legs tremble, their hands shake, they can no longer walk, nor are they capable of doing any thing : and should there chance to be one free from those disasters, his memory decreases, his spirits sink, and his heart fails him ; he is not half so chearful, pleasant and happy as I am.

Several physicians were so good as to prognosticate to me, ten  
years

years ago, that it was impossible for me to hold out three years longer: however, I still find myself less weak than ever, and am stronger this year than any that went before. This sort of miracle, and the many favours which I received from God, obliged them to tell me, that I brought along with me at my birth, an extraordinary and special gift of nature; and for the proof of their opinion they employed all their rhetoric, and made several elegant speeches on that head. It must be acknowledged, my Lord, that eloquence has a charming force on the mind of man, since it often persuades him to believe that which never was, and never could be. I was very much

I 3

pleas'd.

pleas'd to hear them discourse; and could it be help'd, since they were men of parts who harangued at that rate? But that which delighted me most, was to reflect, that age and experience may render a man wiser than all the colleges in the world can. And it was in truth by their help, that I knew the error of that notion. To undeceive those gentlemen, and at the same time set them right, I replied, that their way of arguing was not just: that the favour I received was no special, but a general and universal one: that there was no man alive, but what may have received it as well as myself: that I was but a man as well as others: that we have all, (besides our  
existence,)

existence,) judgment and reason: that we are all born with the same faculties of the soul; because GOD was pleased that we should all have those advantages above the other creatures, who have nothing in common with us, but the use of their senses: that the Creator has bestowed on us this reason, and judgment to preserve our lives: that man, when young, being more subject to sense than reason, is too apt to give himself up to pleasure; and that when arrived to thirty or forty years of age, he ought to consider, that, if he has been so imprudent as to lead, till that time, a disorderly life, 'tis now high time for him to take up and live temperately, for he ought to remember

ber that though he has hitherto been held up by the vigour of youth and a good constitution, yet he is now at the noon of life, and must bethink himself of going down towards the grave, with a heavy weight of years on his back, of which his frequent pains and infirmities are certain forerunners; and that therefore, if he has not been so happy as to do it already, he ought now, immediately to change his course of life, especially with respect to the quality and quantity of his food, as 'tis on that the health and length of our days do so greatly depend. For in truth, my Lord, 'tis impossible for those who will always gratify their appetites, not to ruin their constitutions;

tions ; and that I might not entirely ruin mine, I devoted myself to a sober life. I must confess, it was not without great reluctance that I abandoned my luxurious way of living. I began with praying to GOD, that he would grant me the gift of Temperance, well knowing that he always hears our prayers with delight. Then, considering, that when a man is about to undertake any thing of importance, he may greatly strengthen himself in it, by often looking forward to the great pleasures and advantages that he is to derive from it. Just as the husbandman takes comfort under his toils, by reflecting on the sweets of abundance ; and as the good christian gladdens in the service  
of

of GOD, when he thinks on the glory of that service, and the eternal joys that await him: so I, in like manner, by seriously reflecting on the innumerable pleasures and blessings of health, and beseeching GOD to strengthen me in my good resolutions, immediately entered on a course of temperance and regularity. And though it was at first highly disagreeable, yet I can truly say, that in a very little time the disagreeableness vanished, and I came to find great delight in it.

Now on hearing my arguments, they all agreed that I had said nothing but what was reasonable; nay, the youngest among them told me that he was willing to allow that these advantages

vantages might be common to all men, but was afraid, they were seldom attained ; and that I must be singularly favoured of Heaven to get above the delights of an easy life, and embrace one quite contrary to it : that he did not look on it to be impossible, since my practice convinced him of the contrary, but however, it seemed to him to be very difficult.

I replied, that it was a shame to relinquish a good undertaking on account of the difficulties that might attend it, and that the greater the difficulty, the more glory should we acquire: that it is the will of the Creator, that every one should attain to a long life, because in his old age, he might be freed from  
the

the bitter fruits that were produced by sense, and might enjoy the good effects of his reason; that when he shakes hands with his vices, he is no longer a slave to the devil, and finds himself in a better condition of providing for the salvation of his soul: that God, whose goodness is infinite, has ordained that the man who comes to the end of his race, should end his life without any distemper, and so pass, by a sweet and easy death, to a life of immortality and glory, which I expect. I hope (said I to him) to die singing the praises of my Creator. The sad reflection, that we must one day cease to live, is no disturbance to me, though I easily perceive that at my age, that day

day cannot be far off; nor am I afraid of the terrors of hell, because, blessed be God, I have long ago shaken hands with my sins, and put my trust in the mercy and merits of the blood of *Jesus Christ*.

To this my young antagonist had nothing to say, only that he was resolved to lead a sober life, that he might live and die as happily as I hoped to do; and that though hitherto he had wished to be young a long time, yet now he desired to be quickly old, that he might enjoy the pleasures of such an admirable age.

The desire I had of giving you, my lord, a long entertainment, as being one with whom I could never be weary, has inclined

clined me to write this long letter to you, and to add one word more before I conclude.

Some sensual persons give out, that I have troubled myself to no purpose, in composing a treatise concerning temperance, and that I have lost my time in endeavouring to persuade men to the practice of that which is impossible. Now this surprizes me the more, as these gentlemen must see that I had led a temperate life many years before I composed this treatise, and that I never should have put myself to the trouble of composing it, had not long experience convinced me, that it is a life which any man may easily lead, who really wishes to be healthy and happy. And, besides the evidence of my  
own

own experience, I have the satisfaction to hear, that numbers on seeing my treatise have embraced such a life, and enjoyed from it the very same blessings which I enjoy. Hence I conclude, that no man of good sense will pay any regard to so frivolous an objection. The truth is, those gentlemen who make this objection, are so unhappily wedded to the poor pleasure of eating and drinking, that they cannot think of moderating it, and as an excuse for themselves, they choose to talk at this extravagant rate. However, I pity these gentlemen with all my heart, though they deserve for their intemperance, to be tormented with a complication of distempers, and to be the victims of their passions a whole eternity.

## CHAP. IV.

*Of the Birth and Death of Man,*

**T**HAT I may not be deficient in that duty of charity, which all men owe to one another, or lose one moment of that pleasure which conscious usefulness of life affords; I again take up my pen. What I am going to say will be looked on as impossible, or incredible; but, at the same time, nothing is more certain, nor more worthily to be admired by all posterity. I am now ninety-five years of age, and find myself as healthy and brisk, as if I were but twenty-five.

What ingratitude should I be guilty of, did I not return thanks

to the divine Goodness, for all his mercies conferred upon me? Most of your old men have scarce arrived to sixty, but they find themselves loaded with infirmities: they are melancholy, unhealthful; always full of the frightful apprehensions of dying: they tremble day and night, for fear of being within one foot of their graves; and are so strongly possessed with the dread of it, that it is a hard matter to divert them from that doleful thought. Blessed be God, I am free from their ills and terrors. It is my opinion, that I ought not to abandon myself to that vain fear: this I will make appear by the sequel; and will also evince, how certain I am of living an hundred years.

But that I may observe a method in the subject I am treating of, I will begin with man at his birth, and thence accompany him through every stage of life, to his grave.

I say then, that some are born with so bad a constitution, that they live but a few days, months or years.

Others are born well shaped and healthful, but of a tender make; and some of these live ten, twenty, thirty, or forty years, without being able to attain to that period which is called old age.

Others there are, who bring along with them a strong constitution into the world, and they indeed live to old age: but it is generally (as already observed)  
an

an old age of sickness and sorrow ; for which they are to thank themselves ; because they most unreasonably presume on the strength of their constitution ; and will not on any account, abate of that hearty feeding which they indulged in their younger days. Just as if they were to be as vigorous at fourscore as in the flower of their youth : nay, they go about to justify this their imprudence, pretending that as we lose our health and vigour by growing old, we should endeavour to repair the loss, by increasing the quantity of our food, since it is by sustenance that man is preserved.

But in this they are dangerously mistaken ; for as the natural

ral

ral heat and strength of the stomach lessens as a man grows in years, he should diminish the quantity of his meat and drink, common prudence requiring that a man should proportion his diet to his digestive powers.

This is a certain truth, that sharp four humours on the stomach, proceed from a slow imperfect digestion; and that but little good chyle can be made, when the stomach is filled with fresh food before it has carried off the former meal.—It cannot therefore be too frequently nor too earnestly recommended, that as the natural heat decays by age, a man ought to abate the quantity of what he eats and drinks; nature requiring but very little for the healthy support  
of

of the life of man, especially that of an old man. Would my aged friends but attend to this single precept which has been so signally serviceable to me, they would not be troubled with one twentieth of those infirmities which now harass and make their lives so miserable. They would be light, active, and chearful like me, who am now near my *hundredth year*. And those of them who were born with good constitutions, might live to the age of one hundred and twenty. Had I been blest with a robust constitution, I should in all probability, attain the same age. But as I was born with feeble stamina, I shall not perhaps outlive an hundred. And this moral  
certainty

certainty of living to a great age, is to be sure, a most pleasing and desirable attainment, and it is the prerogative of none but the temperate. For all those who (by immoderate eating and drinking) fill their bodies with gross humours, can have no reasonable assurance of living a single day longer: oppressed with food and swoln with superfluous humours, they are in continual danger of violent fits of the cholic, deadly strokes of the apoplexy, fatal attacks of the cholera morbus, burning fevers, and many such acute and violent diseases, whereby thousands are carried to their graves, who a few hours before, looked very hale and hearty. And this moral certainty of long life  
is

is built on such good grounds, as seldom ever fail. For, generally speaking, Almighty God seems to have settled his works on the sure grounds of natural causes, and temperance is (by divine appointment) the natural cause of health and long life. Hence it is next to impossible, that he who leads a strictly temperate life, should breed any sickness or die of an unnatural death, before he attains to the years to which the natural strength of his constitution was to arrive. I know some persons are so weak as to excuse their wicked intemperance, by saying, that "the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong," and that therefore, let them eat and drink as they

they please, they shall not die till their time comes. How scandalously do these men misunderstand Solomon and abuse truth! How would it startle us to hear our friends say, "that let them sleep and play, as they please, they shall not be beggars till their time comes."

Solomon does indeed say that "the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong;" but he must be no better than a madman, who thence infers, that it is not *generally* so. For the invariable and eternal experience of mankind demonstrates, that ninety nine times in an hundred, the race is to the swift and the battle to the strong, bread to the industrious, and health to the temperate.

But

But it is a matter of fact, and not to be denied, that, though temperance has the divine efficacy to secure us from violent disease and unnatural death, yet it is not to be supposed to make a man immortal. It is impossible but that time, which effaces all things, should likewise destroy that most curious workmanship of God, the human body: but it is man's privilege to end his days by a natural death, that is, without pain and agony, as they will see me, when the heat and strength of nature is quite exhausted. But I promise myself, that day is a pretty comfortable distance off yet, and I fancy I am not mistaken, because I am still healthy and brisk, relish all I eat, sleep

L                      quietly,

quietly, and find no defect in any of my senses. Besides, all the faculties of my mind are in the highest perfection; my understanding clear and bright as ever; my judgment sound; my memory tenacious; my spirits good; and my voice, the first thing that fails others, still so strong and sonorous, that every morning and evening, with my dear grand children around me, I can address my prayers and chant the praises of the Almighty. O, how glorious this life of mine is like to be, replete with all the felicities which man can enjoy on this side of the grave; and exempt from that sensual brutality which age has enabled my better reason to banish, and therewith all its bitter  
fruits,

fruits, the extravagant passions and distressful perturbations of mind. Nor yet can the fears of death find room in my mind, as I have no licensed sins to cherish such gloomy thoughts: neither can the death of relations and friends give me any other grief than that of the first movement of nature, which cannot be avoided, but is of no long continuance. Still less am I liable to be cast down by the loss of worldly goods. I look on these things as the property of heaven; I can thank him for the loan of so many comforts, and when his wisdom sees fit to withdraw them, I can look on their departure without murmuring.—This is the happiness of those only, who grow old in  
the

the ways of temperance and virtue ; a happiness which seldom attends the most flourishing youth who live in vice. Such are all subject to a thousand disorders, both of body and mind, from which I am entirely free: on the contrary ; I enjoy a thousand pleasures, which are as pure as they are calm.

The first of these is to do service to my country. O ! what a glorious amusement, in which I find infinite delight, in shewing my countrymen how to fortify this our dear city of Venice, in so excellent a manner, as to make her a famous republic, a rich and matchless city. Another amusement of mine is that of shewing this maid and queen of cities, in what manner she  
may

may always abound with provisions, by manuring untilled lands, draining marshes, and laying under water and thereby fatning fields, which had all along been barren for want of moisture. My third amusement is in shewing my native city, how, though already strong, she may be rendered much stronger; and, though extremely beautiful, may still increase in beauty; though rich, may acquire more wealth, and may be made to enjoy better air, though her air is excellent. These three amusements, all arising from the idea of public utility, I enjoy in the highest degree. Another very great comfort I enjoy is, that having been defrauded when young, of

a considerable estate, I have made ample amends for that loss, by dint of thought and industry, and without the least wrong done to any person, have doubled my income, so that I am able not only to provide for my dear grand children, but to educate and assist many poor youth to begin the world. And I cannot help saying, I reflect with more pleasure on what I lay out in that way, than in any other.

Another very considerable addition to my happiness is, that what I have written from my own experience, in order to recommend *temperance*, has been of great use to numbers, who loudly proclaim their obligations to me for that work, several

ral of them having sent me word from foreign parts, that, under God, they are indebted to me for their lives. But that which makes me look on myself as one of the happiest of men, is, that I enjoy as it were, two sorts of lives; the one terrestrial, which I possess in fact; the other celestial, which I possess in thought; and this thought is attended with unutterable delight, being founded on such glorious objects, which I am morally sure of obtaining, through the infinite goodness and mercy of God. Thus I enjoy this terrestrial life, partly through the beneficent influences of temperance and sobriety, virtues so pleasing to Heaven; and I enjoy, through cordial love of the same  
divine

divine Majesty, the celestial life, by contemplating so often on the happiness thereof, that I can hardly think of any thing else. And I hold, that dying in the manner I expect, is not really death, but a passage of the soul from this earthly life, to a celestial, immortal, and infinitely perfect existence. And I am so far charmed with the glorious elevation to which I think my soul is designed, that I can no longer stoop to those trifles, which, alas! charm and in-fatuate too great a part of mankind. The prospect of parting with my favourite enjoyments of this life, gives me but little concern; on the contrary, I thank God, I often think of it with secret joy, since by that  
loss

loss I am to gain a life incomparably more happy.

O! who then would be troubled, were he in my place? what good man, but must instantly throw off his load of worldly sorrow, and address his grateful homage to the Author of all this happiness? However, there is not a man on earth, who may not hope for the like happiness, if he would but live as I do. For indeed I am no angel, but only a man, a servant of God, to whom a good and temperate life is so pleasing, that even in this world he greatly rewards those who practise it.

And whereas many embrace a holy and contemplative life, teaching and preaching the great truths of religion, which is  
*highly*

*highly* commendable, the chief employment of such being to lead men to the knowledge and worship of GOD. O that they would likewise betake themselves entirely to a regular and temperate life! They would then be considered as saints indeed upon earth, as those primitive christians were, who observed so constant a temperance, and lived so long. By living like them, to the age of one hundred and twenty, they might make such a proficiency in holiness, and become so dear to GOD, as to do the greatest honour and service to the world; and they would besides, enjoy constant health and spirits, and be always happy within themselves; whereas they are now  
too

too often infirm and melancholy. If indeed they are melancholy, because they see God, (after all his goodness) so ungratefully requited; or because they see men (notwithstanding their innumerable obligations to love) yet hating and grieving each other: such melancholy is truly amiable and divine.

But to be melancholy on any other account, is, to speak the truth, quite unnatural in good christians; such persons being the servants of God and heirs of immortality; and it is still more unbecoming the ministers of religion, who ought to consider themselves, as of all others, in the most important, serviceable, and delightful employment. I know,

I know, many of these gentlemen think that GOD does purposely bring these occasions of melancholy on them, that they may in this life do penance for their former sins; but therein, as I think, they are much mistaken. I cannot conceive how GOD, who loves mankind, can be delighted with their sufferings. He desires that mankind should be happy, both in this world and the next; he tells us so in a thousand places in his word, and we actually find that there is not a man on earth, who does not feel the good Spirit of GOD, forbidding and condemning those wicked tempers, which would rob him of that happiness. No; it is the devil and sin which bring all the evils we suffer, on  
our

our heads, and not God, who is our Creator and Father, and desires our happiness: his commands tend to no other purpose. And temperance would not be a virtue, if the benefit it does us by preserving us from distempers, were repugnant to the designs of God in our old age.

In short, if all religious people were strictly temperate and holy, how beautiful, how glorious a scene should we then behold! Such numbers of venerable old men as would create surprise. How many wise and holy teachers to edify the people by their wholesome preachings and good examples! How many sinners might receive benefit by their fervent intercessions! How many blessings might

they shower upon the earth! and not as now, eating and drinking so intemperately, as to inflame the blood and excite worldly passions, pride, ambition, and concupiscence, foiling the purity of their minds, checking their growth in holiness, and in some unguarded moment, betraying them into sins disgraceful to religion, and ruinous to their peace for life.—Would they but feed temperately, and that chiefly on vegetable food, they would as I do, soon find it the most agreeable, (by the cool temperate humors it affords) the best friend to virtuous improvement, begetting gentle manners, mild affections, purity of thought, heavenly mindedness, quick relish of virtue and delight

light in God. This was the life led by the holy fathers of the desert, who subsisted entirely on wild fruits and roots, drinking nothing but pure water, and yet lived to an extreme old age, in good health and spirits, and always happy within themselves. And so may all in our days live, provided they would but mortify the lusts of a corruptible body, and devote themselves entirely to the exalted service of God; for this is indeed the privilege of every faithful christian as Jesus Christ left it, when he came down upon earth to shed his precious blood, in order to deliver us from the tyrannical servitude of the devil; and all through his immense goodness.

To conclude, since length of days abounds with so many blessings, and I am so happy as to have arrived at that state, I find myself bound (in charity) to give testimony in favour of it, and solemnly assure all mankind, that I really enjoy a great deal more than what I now mention; and that I have no other motive in writing on this subject, than to engage them to practise, all their lives, those excellent virtues of temperance and sobriety, which will bring them, like me, to a happy old age. And therefore I never cease to raise my voice, crying out to you, my friends, may your days be many, that you may long serve God, and be fitter for the glory which he prepares for his children!

APPEN.

APPENDIX.  
GOLDEN RULES  
OF  
HEALTH,

SELECTED FROM HIPPOCRATES, PLU-  
TARCH, AND SEVERAL OTHER EMI-  
NENT PHYSICIANS AND  
PHILOSOPHERS.

OF all the people on the  
face of the earth, the A-  
mericans are under the greatest  
obligations to live temperately.  
Formed for commerce, our coun-  
try abounds with bays, rivers,  
and creeks, the exhalations from  
which, give the air a dampness  
unfriendly to the springs of life.  
To counteract this infelicity  
of climate, reason teaches us to  
adopt every measure that may  
give tone and vigour to the con-  
stitution.

stitution. This precaution, at all times necessary, is peculiarly so in autumn, for then the body is relaxed by the intense heat of the dog-days, the air is filled with noxious vapours from putrid vegetables; Nature herself wears a sickly drooping aspect; the most robust feel a disagreeable weariness and foreness of their flesh, a heaviness and sluggishness in motion, quick feverish flushings, and sudden chills darting along their nerves, (all plain proofs of a sickly atmosphere, and tottering health.) Now, if ever we need the aid of all-invigorating temperance, now keep the stomach light and vigorous by moderate feeding, the veins well stored with healthy blood, and the

the nerves full braced by manly exercise and comely chearfulness. Be choice of your diet, fruit perfectly ripe, vegetables thoroughly done, and meats of the easiest digestion, with a glass or two of generous wine at each meal, and all taken in such prudent moderation, as not to load but strengthen the constitution. For at this critical juncture, a single act of intemperance, which would scarcely be felt in the wholesome frosts of winter, often turns the scale against nature, and brings on obstinate indigestions, load at stomach, loss of appetite, a furred tongue, yellowness of the eyes, bitter taste in the mouth in the morning, bilious vomitings, agues, fevers, &c. which in spite of the best medicines,

medicines, often wear a man away to a ghost. If blessed with a good constitution, he *may* perhaps crawl on to *winter*, and get braced up again by her friendly frosts; but if old or infirm, it is likely death will overtake him, before he can reach that city of refuge.

“The giddy practice of throwing aside our winter clothes too early in the spring, and that of exposing our bodies, when overheated to sudden cold, has destroyed more people, than famine, pestilence and sword\*.”

*Sydenham.*

Those

\* I saw (says an American officer) thirteen grenadiers lying dead by a spring, in consequence of drinking too freely of the cold water, while dripping with sweat in a hard day's march, in summer. And many a charming girl, worthy of a tender husband, has sunk into the icy embraces of death, by suddenly exposing her delicate frame,

Those who, by any accident, have lost a meal, (suppose their dinner) ought not to eat a plentiful supper; for if they do, it will lie heavy on their stomach, and they will have a more restless night than if they had both dined and supped heartily. He therefore who has missed his dinner, and finds himself empty and faint, wearied and chilly, should make a light supper of some spoon victuals, rather than of any strong solid food.\*

*Hippocrates.*

He

frame, warm from the ball-room, to the cold air. And since "the universal cause acts not by partial, but by general laws," many a good soul, with more piety than prudence, turning out quite warm from a crowded preaching into the cold air without cloak or furtout, has gone off in a galloping consumption to that happy world, where pain and sickness are unknown. What a melancholy thing it is, that people cannot take care of their souls, without neglecting their bodies, nor seek their salvation without ruining their health!

\* I have often (says Doctor Mackenzie) experienced the  
benefit

He who has taken a larger quantity of food than usual, and feels it heavy and troublesome on his stomach, will, if he is a wise man, go out and puke it up immediately\*. *Hippocrates.*

And here I cannot omit mentioning a very ruinous error into which too many are fond of running, I mean, the frequent use of strong vomits and purgatives. A man every now and then

benefit of this advice, when in the hurry of country practice, I chanced to lose my dinner and return home tired; for if I ate a hearty meat supper, I was sure to be sick, but if I supped on a dish of chocolate, or a bowl of gruel and butter, or toast and wine made weak and spiced, I rested perfectly well, and rose next morning fresh and chearful.

\* The wise son of Sirach confirms this precept, and says, Eccles. xxxi. 21. "If thou hast been forced to eat, arise, go forth and puke; and thou shalt have rest." And most certain it is, (adds an ingenious physician) that hundreds and thousands have brought sickness and death on themselves, by their ignorance or neglect of this rule. But at the same time people should carefully avoid a repetition of that excess, which renders such an evacuation necessary, for frequent vomitings do greatly tend to weaken and destroy the tone of the stomach.

then feeds too freely on some favourite dish; by such excess the stomach is weakened, the body filled with superfluous humours, and he presently finds himself much out of sorts. The only medicine in this case, is moderate exercise, innocent amusement, and a little abstinence, this is nature's own prescription, as appears by her taking away his appetite. But having long placed his happiness in eating and drinking, he cannot think of relinquishing a gratification so dear to him, and so sets himself to force an appetite by drams, flings, elixir of vitriol, wine and bitters, pickles, sauces, &c. and on the credit of this artificial appetite, feeds again as if he possessed the most vigorous health.

health. He now finds himself *entirely* disorderd, general heaviness and weariness of body, flatulent uneasiness, frequent eructations, loss of appetite, disturbed slumbers, frightful dreams, bitter taste in the mouth, &c. He now complains of a foul stomach, or (in his own words) that his stomach is full of bile; and immediately takes a dose of tartar emetic or a strong purgative, to cleanse out his stomach, and so prepare for another course of high living. Of all the Apollyons or destroyers of nerves, health and life, this is the greatest; and I have no sort of doubt on my own mind but it has broken down more constitutions, brought on more distempers and sent more people to

an early grave, than all the vices of this bedlam world put together. How much wiser would it be in this case to follow the advice of the celebrated Boerhaave, i. e. to use a little abstinence, take moderate exercise, and thereby help nature to carry off her crudities and recover her springs. I have been often told by a lady of quality, whose circumstances obliged her to be a good œconomist, and whose prudence and temperance preserved her health and senses unimpaired to a great age, that she had kept herself out of the hands of the physicians many years by this simple regimen. People in health should never force themselves to eat when they have no appetite; Nature, the best judge

in these matters, will never fail to let us know the proper time of refreshment. To act contrary to this rule, will assuredly weaken the powers of digestion, impair health and shorten life. *Plutarch.*

“ Let us beware of such food as tempts us to eat when we are not hungry, and of such liquors as entice us to drink when we are not thirsty.” *Socrates.*

“ He who was active and nimble before meals, if he becomes heavy and dull after meals, has certainly transgressed the laws of temperance; for the true end of eating and drinking is to refresh, and not to oppress the body.” *Lessius.*

It is really surprising (says Plutarch) what benefit men of letters

letters would receive from reading aloud every day; we ought therefore to make that exercise familiar to us, but it should not be done immediately after dinner, nor fatigue, for that error has proved hurtful to many. But though loud reading is a very healthy exercise, violent vociferation is highly dangerous; it has in thousands of instances burst the tender blood vessels of the lungs, and brought on incurable consumptions\*.

“ The

\* Would to God, all ministers of religion (I mention *them* because they are generally most wanting in this great article of prudence) would but attend to the advice of this eminent Philosopher. They would, many of them, live much longer, and consequently stand a good chance to be more useful men here on earth, and brighter saints in heaven. What can give greater pain to a man who has the prosperity of religion at heart, than to see an *amiable, pious young divine*, (who promised great services to the world) spitting up his lungs, and dying of a consumption brought on by preaching ten times louder than he had need! Since the world began, no man ever  
spoke

“ The world has long made a just distinction betwixt men of learning, and wise men. Men of learning are oft-times the weakest of men : they read and meditate incessantly, without allowing proper relaxation or refreshment to the body ; and think that a frail machine can bear fatigue as well as an immortal spirit. This puts me in mind of what happened to the camel in the fable ; which, refusing tho’ often premonished, to ease the ox in due time of a part of his load, was forced at last to carry not only the ox’s whole load, but the ox himself also, when he died under his burden. Thus it happens

spoke with *half* the energy which the interests of eternal souls deserve, but there is a wide difference betwixt an *instructive, moving, melting eloquence*, and a *loud, unmeaning monotony*.

happens to the mind which has no compassion on the body, and will not listen to its complaints, nor give it any rest, until some sad distemper compels the mind to lay study and contemplation aside; and to lie down, with the afflicted body, upon the bed of languishing and pain. Most wisely, therefore, does Plato admonish us to take the same care of our bodies as of our minds; that like a well matched pair of horses to a chariot, each may draw his equal share of weight. And when the *mind* is most intent upon virtue and usefulness, the *body* should then be most cherished by prudence and temperance, that so it may be fully equal to such arduous and noble pursuits.”—

Nothing is more injurious to health than hard study at night; it is inverting the order of nature, and ruining the constitution.

All who are so wise as to rise early, and spend the day in useful industry, will, by the time night's sable curtains are drawn, feel the need of that balmy restorative, *sleep*. Now when nature is already exhausted, and needs repose, to go to hard study, what is it but to strain the nerves, waste the spirits, bring tiresome watchfulness, loss of appetite and general disorder? But most of all, is it not improper to lie reading in bed by candle light? for it not only partakes of the usual inconveniences of night study, such as  
straining

straining the eyes, weakening the sight, fatiguing the mind, and wearing away the constitution, but is oft-times the cause of the saddest calamities; thousands of elegant houses, with all their costly furniture, have been reduced to ashes by this very imprudent practice. I knew an amiable lady, who was not a little tried by this ill habit in one of her acquaintance. He would sleep all the morning, play the truant all day, and at night nothing would serve him, but he must read in bed till midnight, with a blazing candle all the time close to the curtains. The thought of this, as *well it might*, would not allow the lady a moment's rest, nor a single wink to the maid, who, poor thing! was packed

packed up stairs every quarter of an hour, to take a peep at the candle. I suppose it might take well nigh the *whole* of an *angel's benevolence* to keep up a twelve month intimacy with so dangerous and troublesome a visitant. But admitting this habit of night studying and reading in bed, were attended with none of these alarming inconveniences; no wise man would indulge in it, for it is evident he would save no time, gain no pleasure nor advantage from it. For, it is very certain *we must sleep*, and the paternal hand of God draws over us the shades of night for that purpose; and if we don't sleep *then*, we must do it in the day, and is it not a thousand times better to sleep in the night, while  
darkness

darkness veils from our eyes all the beauties of creation, and unwholesome damps make it dangerous to stir out, than to snore in bed all the morning, when the cheerful light, the chirping birds, the fragrant air, and gladdening sight of gay-green landscapes, together with the spirit-stirring voice of glorious toil, invite to health, to usefulness, and pleasure?

But how can giddy youth, hurried on by strong passions and appetites, be prevented from running into those excesses, which may cut them off in the prime of their days, or at least hoard up diseases and remorse for old age? Why, their passions and appetites must early be restrained by proper discipline  
and

and example. This important office must be done by their parents, whose first and greatest care should be “to train up their children in the way they should go, that when they are old they may not depart from it.”

“O that parents (says the excellent Mr. Locke) would carefully instill into their children that great principle of all virtue and worth, viz. nobly to deny themselves every wrong desire, and steadily follow what reason dictates as best, though the appetite should lean the other way. We often see parents by humouring them when little, corrupt the principles of virtue in their children; and wonder afterwards to taste the bitter waters of their undutifulness or wickedness,

wickedness, when they themselves have contributed thereto.

Why should we wonder, that he who has been accustomed to have his will in every thing, when he was in coats, should desire and contend for it when he is in breeches? Youth is the golden season to inure the mind to the practice of virtue, on which their future health and respectability depend, and without which it will be impossible to deliver their constitutions, unbroken, to manhood and old age. Vice is utterly inconsistent with health, which can never dwell with lewdness, luxury, sloth and violent passions. The life of the epicure and rake, is not only short, but miserable. It would shock the modest and  
compassionate,

compassionate, to hear of those exquisite pains, and dreadful agonies, which profligate young persons suffer from their debaucheries, before they can even reach the friendly shelter of an untimely *grave*. Or if some few stop short in their career of riot, before they have quite destroyed the springs of life, yet those springs are generally rendered as feeble and crazy, by the liberties which they have already taken, that they only support a gloomy, dispirited, dying life, tedious to themselves, and troublesome to all around them; and (which is still more pitiable) often transmit their complaints to an innocent unhappy offspring.







★ ★ ARMY ★ ★  
MEDICAL LIBRARY  
*Cleveland Branch*

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF MEDICINE



NLM 00988620 9