

Sure methods of attaining a long and healthful life, with means of correcting a bad constitution / Written originally in Italian by Lewis Cornaro, a noble Venetian, when he was near a hundred years of age.

Contributors

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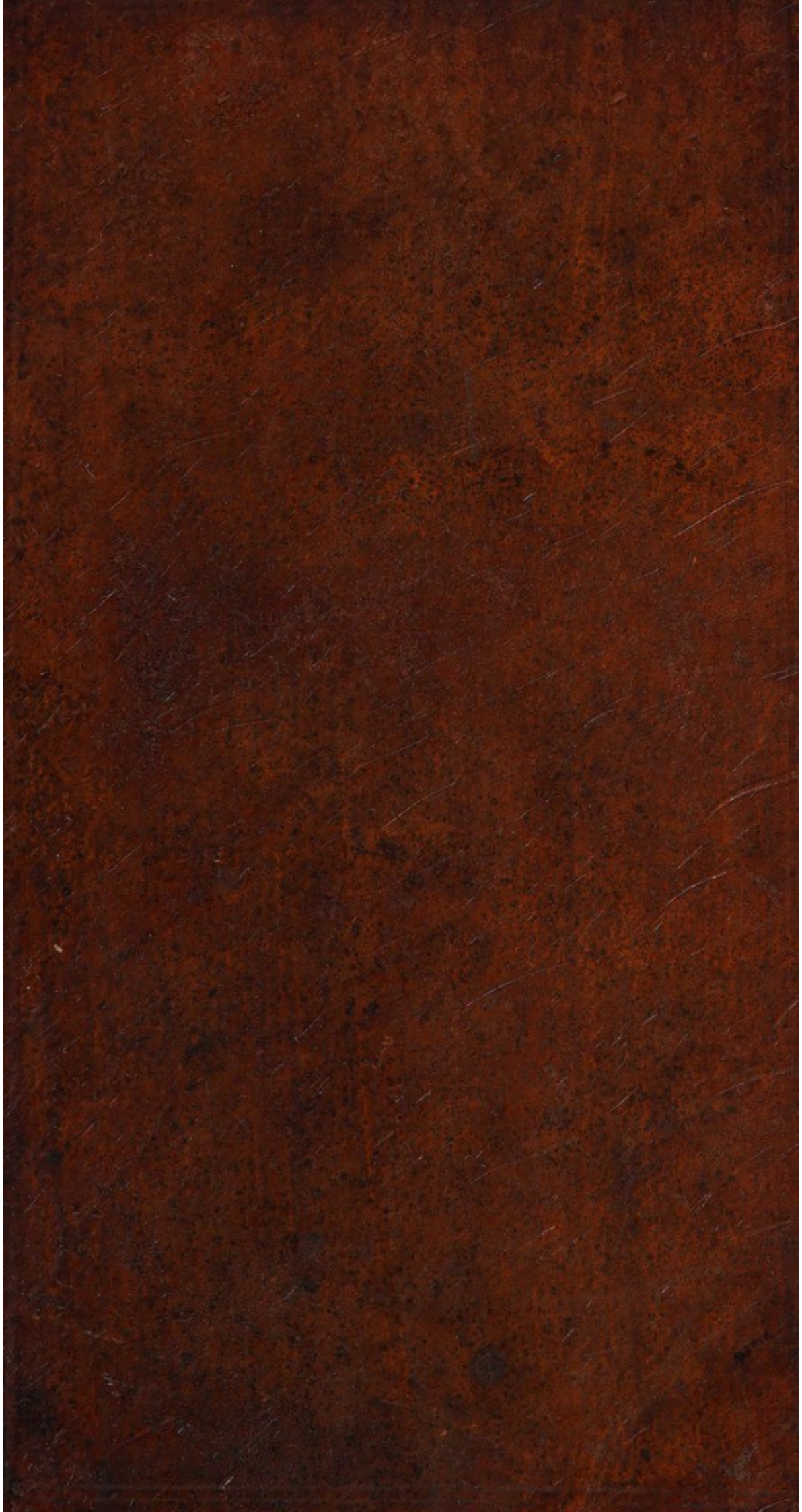
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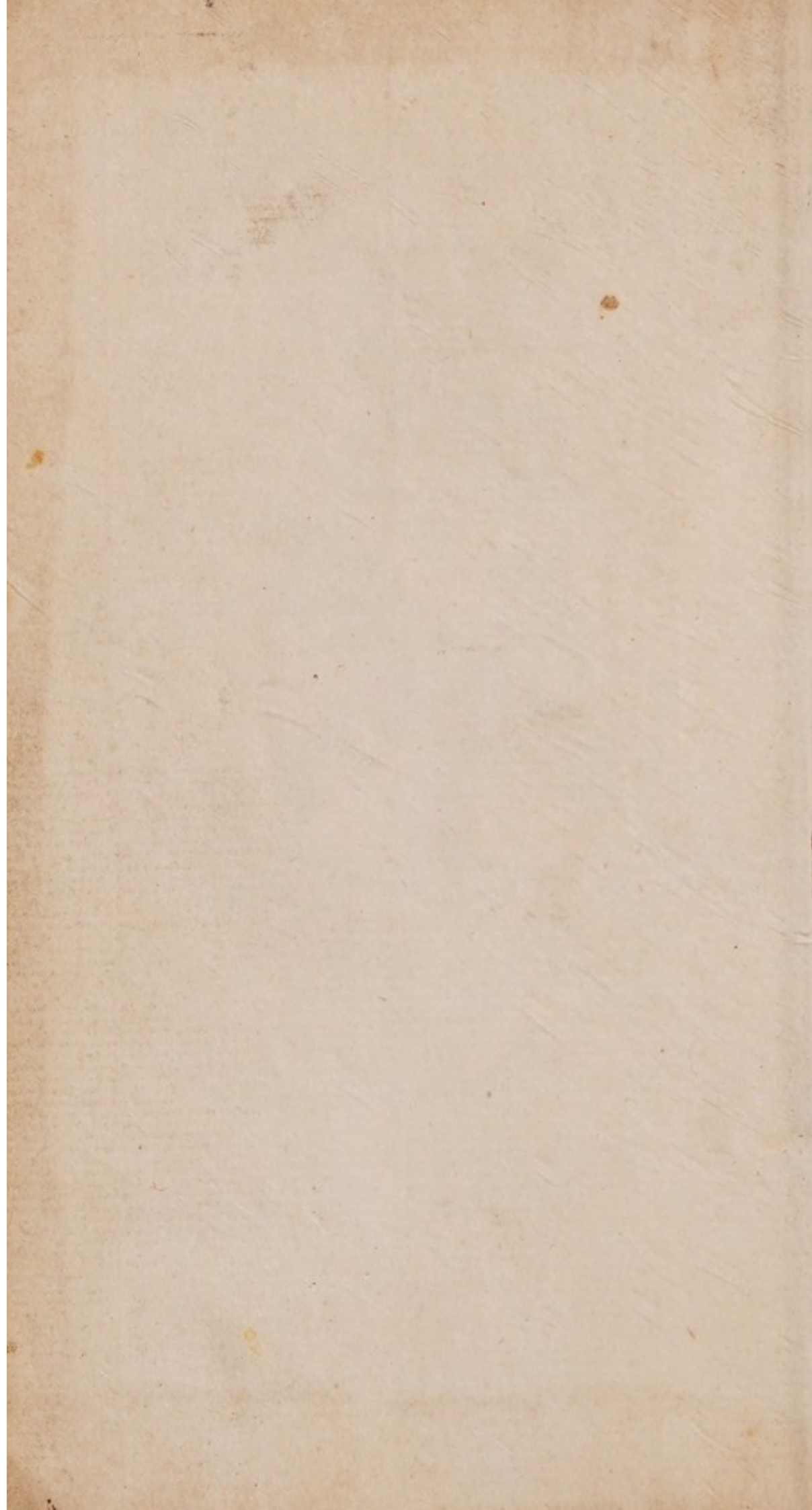
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S U R E

M E T H O D S

Thomas Clarke

O F A T T A I N I N G .

Kneeling on

A L O N G

A N D

H E A L T H F U L L I F E .

With Means of correcting a

B A D C O N S T I T U T I O N .

Written originally in ITALIAN,

B Y L E W I S C O R N A R O ,

a Noble Venetian, when he was near
an Hundred Years of Age.

E D I N B U R G H :

Printed by W A L . R U D D I M A N Jun.
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P R E F A C E.

LONG life is one of the greatest blessings that we mortals can enjoy ; it being what all men naturally desire and wish for. Nay, when men are come to the longest date, they desire yet to live a little longer. But, however, health is that which sweetens all our other enjoyments, without which the longest life would be no more than a living death, and render us burdensome to ourselves, and troublesome to all about us.

But though life be so desirous, and health so great a blessing, yet how much is both the one and the other undervalued by the greatest part of mankind ? whatever they may think or say of the inestimable value of those precious jewels, yet it is plain, by their practice, that they slight and despise both ; and the greatest part of mankind are hardly sensible of the worth of health, 'till they come in good earnest to be deprived of it.

How many men do we daily see, by their intemperance and excess, lay the seeds of future distempers, which either carry them off in the flower of their age, which is the case of most ; or else render their old age, if they arrive to it, uneasy and uncomfortable ? and though we see others daily drop into the grave before us, and are very apt, with justice, to ascribe the loss of our friends to their living too fast ; yet we cannot forbear treading in the same steps, and following the same courses, 'till at last, by a

violent and unnatural death, we are hurried off the stage of life after them.

What the noble CORNARO observes of the Italians of his time, may very well be applied to this nation at present, *viz.* “ that we are
 ‘ not contented with a plain bill of fare ; that
 ‘ we ransack the elements of earth, air, and
 ‘ water, for all sorts of creatures to gratify our
 ‘ wanton and luxurious appetites : that as if
 ‘ our tables were too narrow and short to hold
 ‘ our provisions, we heap them up upon one ano-
 ‘ ther : And lastly, that, to create a false appe-
 ‘ tite, we rack our cooks inventions for new
 ‘ sauces and provocatives, to make the superflu-
 ‘ ous morsels go down with the greater gust.”

This is not any groundless observation, but it carries an experimental conviction along with it. Look into all our public entertainments and feasts, and see whether luxury and intemperance be not too predominant in them. Men, upon such occasions, think it justifiable to give themselves the loose, to eat heartily, and to drink deeply ; and many think themselves not welcome, or well entertained, if the master of the feast be so wise as not to give them an occasion of losing the man, and assuming the beast.

In opposition to such a practice, and to shew the good effects of a sober and regular life, was the design of CORNARO in writing the ensuing treatise, as is also ours in handing it into the world in an English dress. What he wrote was from his own experience, and he felt the benefit of that regimen which he prescribes to others ; and they may meet with the same success, if, with

prudence :

prudence and caution, they apply it to themselves.

It cannot, indeed, be expected, that every man should tie himself up strictly to the observation of the same rules in his diet, as this noble Venetian followed; since the variety of climates, constitution, age, and other circumstances, may admit of great variations. But this we may assert as a reasonable, general, undeniable maxim, founded upon reason, and the nature of things; that for the preservation of health, and the prolonging a man's life, it is necessary that he eat and drink no more than what is sufficient to support his natural constitution: and, on the contrary, whatsoever he eats or drinks beyond that, is superfluous, and tends to the feeding of the corrupt vicious humours, which will at last, tho' they may be stifled for a time, break out into a flame, and burn the man quite down, or else leave him like a ruined and shattered building.

This general maxim which we have laid down, will hold good with respect to men of all ages and constitutions, and under whatsoever climate they live; if they have but courage to make a due application of it, and to lay a restraint upon their unreasonable appetites.

After all, we will not, we dare not warrant, that the most strict and sober life, will secure a man from all diseases, or prolong his days to that age which Signor CORNARO promises them, by his own experience. Natural infirmities and weakneses, which a man brings along with him into the world, which he derived from his parents, and could not avoid, may make him sickly and unhealthful, notwithstanding all his

care and precaution; and outward accidents; (from which no man is free) may cut off the thread of life before it be half spun out. There is no fencing against the latter of these; but as to the former, a man may, in some measure, correct and amend them, by a sober and regular life. In fine, let a man's life be longer or shorter, yet sobriety and temperance render it pleasant and delightful. One that is sober, though he live but thirty or forty years, yet lives long, and enjoys all his days, having a free and clear use of all his faculties: whilst the man that gives himself up to excess, and lays no restraint upon his appetites, though he prolongs his days to threescore or fourscore years (which is next to a miracle), yet is his life but one continued dozing slumber; his head being always full of fumes; the powers of his soul cloudy and dark; the organs of his body weak and worn out; and neither of them fit to discharge the proper offices of a rational creature.

Now, let any one upon serious reflection consider, which is most eligible, a sober and regular, or an intemperate and disorderly course of life. Certainly there is no great difficulty in determining this question; the main business is, to persuade men to put into practice, what they are really in their own consciences convinced to be necessary for them to do. And this might easily be done, were not men bore down, even against their own sentiments, by prejudice, custom and example. It is therefore requisite, in order to the farther recommending of sobriety, to take off, and answer some objections (not taken notice of by CORNARO), which some persons of our

our days make use of to justify their contrary practice.

Some of the wits of the age tell us, “ that
‘ wine, even drank to excess, enlivens the fancy,
‘ and infuses bold and great thoughts into a
‘ man, makes his writings brisk and airy, a plea-
‘ sure to himself, and no less delightful to others;
‘ whilst others, pretending to sobriety, are dull
‘ and flat in all their performances, and nothing
‘ but what is phlegmatic and heavy is the pro-
‘ duct of their genius.”

In answer to this, it may be said, that this
their assertion is apparently false. What the
effects of these spirits of wine and a heated brain
have been, and how much the modern wits have
improved by such a method, is evident by the
many loose and profane plays and poems,
which they have of late years published. There
is, indeed, in them a flashiness, sprightliness, and
unusual boldness of thought; even the outbrav-
ing and ridiculing of all that is good and sacred.
But call you this refined wit? no, it is fool har-
diness, profaneness, and blasphemy; such as
would startle a sober man to hear or read, and
would even make the authors themselves to
blush, were they not arrived to such a degree
of impudence, “ not to be ashamed.” The very
air of those writings informs you, that they
were drawn off from the “ lees of wine :” that
a debauched and licentious conversation gave
them their ideas of men and manners, so forced,
monstrous, and shocking to nature. Besides,
take those witty men out of their own way, and
they are as dull and heavy as any other animals:
witness those paltry defences, which have
hitherto

hitherto been made for the English stage, in opposition to Mr Collier's view ; wherein the poets have wretchedly betrayed their cause, and the force of wit and wine has not been able to withstand a sober and solid argument. But the case is not so with men that observe a due regimen in what they eat or drink : whatever the wits may falsely represent, yet we may venture to assert, that the best discourses which have appeared in print, upon pious, rational, and noble subjects, have been the product of cool, calm, and sober thoughts : no heat, no flash, but true and solid arguments appear in them ; and how unpleasant and dull soever they may seem to some of a vitiated and prejudiced temper of mind, yet, by the wiser part of mankind (on whose judgment one ought chiefly to rely), they will be always had in just respect and esteem.

It is further urged by some others, who have absolutely abandoned themselves to sensual pleasures ; “ that it is better to live a few years, in the full enjoyment of the good things of this world, than to spend a century in a continual restraint laid upon their appetites.” But the extravagancy of these men appears at first view ; “ eat, drink, and be merry,” is all they aim at ; and they do not care how soon their souls shall be required of them : they are strangers to the pleasures which health and good old age can afford to men, and therefore live apace ; though, in truth, they do not live at all to any purpose. By their excesses and extravagancies, they render themselves useless to themselves and others. They are always in a ferment, and never come to cool and sedate thoughts

thoughts of things. Hence it was, that a noble peer of this kingdom, one of a large genius, and quick parts, was hurried by an intemperate sort of life to such extravagancies, as, for several years, not to be his own man; and tho' he lived not half the age of a man, yet, by his excesses, he did not enjoy the half of those days wherein he lived. He perverted those parts which God had given him, and made them the pandars of vice and debauchery; which occasioned a noble friend of his to reflect upon him in these words:

*Such nauseous songs, by a late author made,
Draw an unwilling censure on his shade.
Not that warm thoughts of the approaching joy,
Can shock the nicest, or the chastest cloy:
But obscene words, too gross to raise desire,
Like heaps of embers, only quench the fire.*

Marquis of Normanby's *Essay on Heroic Poetry.*

But not to insist any longer upon the recommendation of a sober and regular course of life, which is the design of CORNARO's treatise, and which no wise man can but approve of, we shall only give you some short account of this translation of it.

The first chapter was formerly published in English, in the small tract of LESSIUS concerning health; but so far mutilated, that it is not the same with the original, and falls very much short of it. How it came to pass that it was thus lamely handed into the world, we shall not now enquire; but it may very fairly serve as a justification for our new version of that discourse; especially

especially since we have rendered the whole, and joined three other discourses with other matters relating thereto. It was thought proper to leave out some few things, which being writ by a staunch Roman Catholic, seemed to reflect upon the Protestant religion : but, bating this, you have the whole of CORNARO's treatises, digested into so many distinct chapters.

But not to weary our reader with too long a preface ; we shall recommend him to the perusal of the book itself, and to the practice of the rules contained therein, according as his own discretion shall direct him ; not questioning, but that, upon a due experience, he will thank CORNARO for the original, and us for the version of it.

V A L E.

THE most remarkable instance of the efficacy of temperance towards the procuring of 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, who was the author of the little treatise I am mentioning, was of an infirm constitution till about forty, when, by obstinately persisting in an exact course of temperance, he recovered a perfect state of health ; insomuch that at fourscore he published his book, which has been translated into English, under the title of “ Sure and certain methods of attaining a long and healthy life.” He lived to give a third or fourth edition of it ; and, after having passed his hundredth year, died without pain or agony, and like one who falls asleep. The treatise I mention, has been taken notice of by several eminent authors, and is written with such a spirit of chearfulness, religion, and good sense, as are the natural concomitants of temperance and sobriety. The mixture of the old man in it, is rather a recommendation than a discredit to it.

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THE
SURE WAY
OF ATTAINING
A LONG
AND
HEALTHFUL LIFE.

CHAP. I.

Of a Sober and Regular Life.

NOTHING is more certain, than that custom becomes a second nature, and has a great influence upon our bodies. Nay, it has too often more power over the mind, than reason itself. The honest man alive, in keeping company with libertines, by degrees forgets the maxims of probity, which he had imbibed from the very breast, and gives himself the loose in those vices which he sees practised. If he be so happy as to relinquish that bad company, and to meet with better, virtue will triumph in its turn: and he insensibly resumes the wisdom which he had abandoned. In a word, all the alterations which we perceive in the temper, carriage, and manners of

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most men, have scarce any other foundation, but the force and prevalency of custom.

I have observed, that it is custom which has given rise to two very dangerous evils within a little time in Italy; the first I reckon to be flattery and ceremonies; and the second, intemperance both in eating and drinking.

The first of these banishes out of human conversation, all plain-dealing, frankness and sincerity: and against the latter I declare open war, as being the most destructive of health, and the greatest enemy it has.

It is an unhappiness into which the men of this age are fallen, that variety of dishes is a-la-mode, and become so far preferable to frugality. And yet the one is the product of temperance; whilst pride, and an unrestrained appetite, is the parent of the other. Notwithstanding the difference of their origin, yet prodigality is at present stiled magnificence, generosity and grandeur, and is commonly esteemed of in the world; whilst frugality passes for avarice, and sordidness of spirit, in the eyes of most men. Here is a visible error, which custom and habit have established.

This error has so far seduced us, that it has prevailed upon us to renounce a frugal way of living, tho' taught us by nature, even from the first age of the world, as be-
ing

ing that which would prolong our days; and has cast us into those excesses, which serve only to abridge the number of them. We become old, before we have been able to taste the pleasure 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 apace, and decline, even before we come to perfection. On the contrary, sobriety maintains us in the natural state wherein we ought to be: our youth is lasting, and our manhood attended with a vigour that does not begin to decay, till after a great many years. A whole century must be run out, before wrinkles can be formed on the face, or gray hairs grow on the head. This is so true, that when men were not addicted to voluptuousness, they had more strength and vivacity at fourscore, than we have at present at forty.

O unhappy Italy! dost thou not perceive that gluttony and excess robs thee every year of more inhabitants, than pestilence, war and famine could have destroyed? Thy true plagues are the frequent feasting, which are so extravagant, that no tables can be made large enough to hold that number of dishes which prodigality lays upon them, but they are forced to be heaped upon one another in pyramids. What

madness, what fury is this? regulate this disorder, if not for God's sake, yet for thy own. I am sure there is no sin that displeases him more, nor any voluptuousness that can be more pernicious to thyself. Endeavour then to heal thyself of this, as being one of those epidemical distempers, from which thou mayest be preserved by wholesome food, and by the precautions that may prevent them. It is very easy too to avoid the evils which an excess in eating or drinking may bring upon us; nor is it any hard matter to find out a sovereign remedy against repletion, since nature itself has taught us it. Let us only give it what it requires, and not over-charge it; for a small matter suffices nature. The rules of temperance are derived from those of right reason. Let us accustom ourselves to eat only to support life; what is more than necessary for our nourishment, sows the seeds of sickness and death; it is a pleasure for which we must pay very dear, and which can neither be innocent, nor excusable, since it may be so prejudicial to us.

How many have I seen cut off, in the flower of their days, by the unhappy custom of high-feeding? how many excellent friends has gluttony deprived me of, who might have been still an ornament to the world, an honour to their country, and have occasioned me as much satisfaction in enjoying

enjoying them, as now I have sorrow in losing them?

It is to put a stop to this spreading contagion, that I have undertaken to shew in this small tract, that the number and variety of dishes is a fatal abuse, which ought to be corrected, by living soberly, as did the patriarchs of old. Several young persons, who, for their good qualities, merit my esteem, having lost their fathers sooner than they could have expected, have expressed a great desire of being acquainted with my manner of living. I could not but think their curiosity very reasonable, since nothing is more reasonable than to wish for long life. The more we advance in years, the larger will our experience be; and if nature, which aims only at our good, advises us to grow old, and concurs with us in that design, it is because she is sensible that the body being weakned by time, which destroys all things, the mind, when disengaged from the snares of voluptuousness, is more at leisure to make use of its reason, and to taste the sweets of virtue. Hereupon I was willing to satisfy those persons, and at the same time to do some service to the public, by declaring what were the motives that induced me to renounce intemperance, and live a sober life; by shewing the method I observe, and what benefit I find thereby; and lastly, by demonstrating,

monstrating, that nothing can be more beneficial to a man, than to observe a regimen, that is practicable, and very necessary to be followed.

I say then, that the weakness of my constitution, which was considerably increased by my way of living, cast me into so deplorable a condition, that I was forced to bid a final adieu to all feasting, to which I had all my life-long a violent inclination. I was so often engaged in excesses of this kind, that my tender constitution could not hold up under the fatigues of them. I fell into several distempers, such as pains of the stomach, the cholick, and the gout. I had a lingering fever, and an intolerable thirst continually hanging upon me. This made me despair of any cure, and though I was then not above 35 or 40 years old, yet I had no hopes of finding any other end of my distempers, but what should end my life too.

The best physicians in Italy made use of all their skill for my recovery, but without success. At last, when they quite despaired of me, they told me they knew only of one remedy that could cure me, if I had resolution enough to undertake and continue it; to wit, a sober and regular life, which they exhorted me to live the remainder of my days, assuring, me, that if intemperance had brought so many distempers,

pers, it was only temperance that could free me from them.

I relished this proposal; and perceived, that notwithstanding the miserable condition to which my intemperance had reduced me, yet I was not so incurable, but the contrary might recover, or at least ease me. And I was the more easily persuaded to it, because I knew several persons of a great age, and a bad constitution, who only prolonged their lives by observing a regimen; whilst, on the other hand, I knew others who were born with a wonderful constitution, and yet broke it by their debaucheries. It seemed very natural to me, that a different way of living and acting produces different effects; since art may conduce to correct, perfect, weaken or destroy nature, according to the good or bad use that is made of it.

The physicians beginning to find me tractable, added to what they had before told me, that I must either chuse a regimen, or death; that I could not live, if I did not follow their advice; and that if I deferred much longer taking my resolutions accordingly, it would be too late to do it. This was home: I was loth to die so soon, and I could not tell how to bear the thoughts of it; besides, I was convinced of their experience and ability. In short, being morally certain that my best way was
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to believe them, I resolved upon putting into practice this course of life, how austere soever it seemed to me.

I intreated my physicians to inform me exactly, after what manner I ought to govern myself? To this they replied, that I must always manage myself as a sick person; eat nothing but what was good, and that in a small quantity.

They had a long time before prescribed the same thing to me; but, till then, I made a jest of it. When I was cloyed with the diet they ordered me, I did eat off all those meats which they had forbidden; and perceiving myself hot and dry, I drank wine in abundance. However, I do not boast of this my conduct: I was one of those imprudent patients, who not being able to resolve upon doing whatever is prescribed them for their health, mind nothing else but deceiving their physicians, though they prove the greatest cheats to themselves at last.

As soon as I resolved to believe my physicians, and thought that it was a disgrace not to have courage enough to be wise; I accustomed myself so much to live soberly, that I contracted a habit of so doing, without any trouble or violence offered to myself. In a little time I found relief; and (which may seem to some incredible), at the year's end, I found myself not only on
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the mending hand, but I was perfectly cured of all my distempers.

When I saw I was recovered, and began to taste the sweets of this sort of resurrection, I made abundance of reflections upon the usefulness of a regular life; I admired the efficacy of it; and perceived, that if it had been so powerful as to cure me, it would be capable enough of preserving me from those distempers to which I had been always subject.

The experience I had thereof removing all farther scruple, I began to study what food was proper for me. I was minded to try, whether what pleased my taste, were beneficial, or prejudicial to my health; and whether the proverb were true, which says, "that what delights the palate, cannot but be good for the heart?" I found it to be false; and that it only serves as an excuse to the sensualists, who are for indulging themselves in whatever might please their appetites.

Formerly I could not drink my wine with ice; I loved heady wines, melons, all sorts of raw fruits, salads, salt meats, high sauces, and baked meats, notwithstanding they were prejudicial to me. Hereupon I made no account of the proverb; and being convinced of its falsity, I made choice of such wines and meats as agreed with my constitution: I proportioned the quantity thereof

thereof according to the strength of my stomach. I declined all diet that did not agree with me; and made it a law to myself, to lay a restraint upon my appetite; so that I always rose from table, with a stomach to eat more if I pleased. In a word, I entirely renounced intemperance, and made a vow to continue the remainder of my life under the same regimen that I had observed: a happy resolution this, the keeping whereof has freed me from all my infirmities, which without it were incurable! I never before lived a year together, without falling once at least into some violent distemper; but this never happened to me afterwards: on the contrary, I have been always healthful, ever since I have been temperate.

The nourishment which I take, being in quality and quantity just enough to suffice nature, breeds no such corrupt humours, as spoil the best constitutions. It is true, indeed, that, besides this precaution, I made use of many others. For instance, I took care to keep myself from heats and colds, I abstained from all violent exercises, as also from ill hours and women. I no longer lived in places where it was an unwholesome air, and took special care to avoid the being exposed to violent winds, or to the excessive heat of the sun. All these cautions may seem morally impossible to those men, who

who, in their transactions in the world, follow no other guides but their own passions; and yet they are not hard to be practised, when a man can be so just to himself, as to prefer the preservation of his health to all the pleasures of sense, and necessary hurry of business.

I likewise found it advantageous to me, not to abandon myself to melancholy, by banishing out of my mind whatever might occasion it: I made use of all the powers of my reason, to restrain the force of those passions, whose violence does often break the constitution of the strongest bodies. It is true, indeed, that I was not always so much a philosopher, nor yet so cautious, but that sometimes I fell into those disorders that I would have avoided; but this rarely happened: and the guard I kept over my appetite, which ought chiefly to be minded, prevented all the pernicious consequences, which might have arisen from my petty irregularities.

This is certain, that the passions have less influence, and cause less disorder, in a body that is regular in its diet, than in another which gives the loose to the cravings of an inordinate appetite. Galen made this observation before me; and I might produce several authorities to support this opinion, but I will go only upon mine own experience. It was impossible for me sometimes

to abstain from the extremes of hot and cold, and to get an entire mastery over all the occasions of trouble which had crossed my whole life; but yet these emotions made no alteration in the state of my health: and I met with a great many instances of persons, who sunk under a less weight, both of body and mind.

There was in our family a considerable suit of law depending against some persons, whose might overcame our right. One of my brothers, and some of my relations, who having never smarted for their debauches, were the more free to indulge them, could not conquer that concern which the loss of this suit of law wrought in them, and perfectly died of grief. I was as sensible as they were of the injustice that was done us, but I did not die for it; and I attribute their loss, and my welfare, to the difference in our way of living. I was made amends for that disgrace, by the comfort I had of not sinking under it; and now make no manner of doubt, but that these passions are less violent in a man that lives soberly, than in one that does not.

At seventy years of age, I had another experiment of the usefulness of my regimen. A business of an extraordinary consequence drawing me into the country, my coach-horses went faster than I would have had them; being lashed with the whip, they went a-head

head, and ran away with me. I was overthrown, and dragged a long way before they could stay the horses. They took me out of the coach, with my head broken, a leg and an arm out of joint, and, in a word, in a very lamentable condition. As soon as they had brought me home again, they sent for the physicians, who did not expect I could live three days to an end : however, they resolved upon letting of me blood, to prevent the coming of a fever, which usually happens in such cases. I was so confident, that the regular life which I had led, had prevented the contracting of any ill humours which I might be afraid of, that I opposed their prescription. I ordered them to dress my head, to set my leg and my 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. From hence I infer, that a regular life is an excellent preservative against all natural evils, and that intemperance produces quite contrary effects.

About five years ago, I was over-persuaded to do a thing which had like to have cost me dear. My relations, whom I love, and who have a real tenderness for me; my friends, with whom I was willing to comply in any thing that was reasonable; lastly, my physicians, who were looked
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upon as the oracles of health, did all agree,, that I eat too little; that the nourishment I took was not sufficient for one off my years; that I ought not only to support nature, but likewise to increase the vigour of it, by eating a little more than I did. It was in vain for me to represent to them,, that nature is content with a little; that this little having preserved me so long in health, custom was become a second nature to me: that it was more reasonable, since natural heat abates in proportion as one grows older, that I should likewise abridge my allowance in diet.

To add the greater force to my opinion,, I mentioned to them the proverb which saith, "He that eats little, eats much;" that is, if a man is willing to live long in the enjoyment of his food, let him live sparingly. I likewise told them, that what one leaves at a meal does more good than what one has already eaten. But all this could not prevail upon them; and, being wearied with their importunities, I was forced to submit. Having therefore before been used to take twelve ounces, in bread,, soups, yolks of eggs, and meat, I increased it to fourteen ounces a-day; and drinking about fourteen ounces of wine, I added two ounces more, and made it sixteen.

This augmentation of diet was so prejudicial to me, that, as brisk as I was, I began

to be sad, and out of humour; every thing offended me, and, upon the least occasion, I broke out into a passion, so that a dog (as they say) would not live with me. At twelve days end, I was taken with a violent fit of the cholic, and that followed by a continual fever, which tormented me five and thirty days together, and, for the first fifteen days, put me into such an agony, that it was impossible for me to take a quarter of an hour's sleep at a time. There was no occasion to ask my friend whether they despaired of my life, and whether they repented of the advice they had given me; for they several times believed that I was a dying man, just giving up the ghost. However, I recovered, tho' I was seventy eight years of age, and tho' we had a harder winter than is usual in our climate.

Nothing freed me from this danger but the regimen which I had so long observed. It had prevented me from contracting those ill humours, with which they are troubled in their old age, who are not so wise as to take care of themselves whilst they are young. I did not perceive in me the old leaven of those humours, and, having nothing to struggle with but the new ones, which were occasioned by this small addition to my diet, I opposed and conquered my indisposition, notwithstanding its force.

From this sickness, and my recovery

from it, we may discern what an influence a regimen has over us, which preserved me from death; and what a power repletion has, which in so few days brought me to the last extremity. It is probable, that order being necessary for the conservation of the universe, and our bodily life being nothing else but a harmony and perfect agreement between the elementary qualities of which our bodies are composed, we cannot live long in a disorderly course of life, of which nothing but corruption can possibly come.

Order, indeed, is so exceeding beneficial, that it cannot be too strictly observed in every thing. It is by the means of this that we arrive to the perfection of arts, and an easy accomplishment in the sciences. It renders armies victorious, keeps up the civility of cities, and concord in families; it renders whole nations flourishing; in a word, it is the support and preserver both of the civil and natural life, and the best remedy that can be applied to all evils, whether public or private.

When a disinterested physician waits upon a patient, let him remember to recommend to him his diet, and especially a regimen therein, in order to his recovery. This is certain, that if all men would live regularly and frugally, there would be so few sick persons, that there would hardly be

be any occasion for remedies; every one^e would become his own physician, and would be convinced that he never met with a better. It would be to little purpose to study the constitution of other men; every one, if he would but apply himself to it, would always be better acquainted with his own, than with that of another; every one would be capable of making those experiments for himself, which another could not do for him, and would be the best judge of the strength of his own stomach, and of the food which is agreeable thereto; for, in one word, it is next to impossible to know exactly the constitution of another, the constitutions of men being as different from one another as their complexions. Who now, for instance, would imagine, that old wine should be hurtful, and new wine wholesome to me? that things which are looked upon to be naught by nature, should refresh and strengthen me? what physician could have observed in me those effects, so uncommon in most bodies, and so contrary to the notions of mankind, when I myself was at no small pains in discovering the causes thereof, after abundance of trials which prove the difference of mens constitutions?

Since no man, therefore, can have a better physician than himself, nor a more sovereign antidote than a regimen, every one ought

to follow my example; that is, to study his own constitution, and to regulate his life according to the rules of right reason.

I own, indeed, that a physician may be sometimes necessary; since there are some distempers which all human prudence cannot provide against. There happen some unavoidable accidents, which seize us after such a manner, as to deprive our judgment of the liberty it ought to have to be a comfort to us. It is foolishness then wholly to rely upon nature, it must have a supply, and recourse must be had to some one or other for it.

If the presence of a friend who comes "to visit a sick person," and to testify the concern he has for his illness, be a comfort and refreshment to him, there is greater reason to believe, that the visit of a physician must needs be more agreeable, being a friend upon whose advice and care we may depend for a speedy recovery of our health; but, for the maintaining of that health, there needs no other support, but a sober 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.

fancied to be in *Aurum Potabile*, and the *Elixir* 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, being over-persuaded by their prejudices so far, as to think they cannot prevent the gratification of them, without abridging too much of their pleasures, they form systems, whereby 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 the cravings of their appetites.

Alas! they know not the value of ten years healthful life in an age, when a man may enjoy the full use of his reason, and make an advantage of all his experiences: in an age wherein a man may appear to be truly such by his wisdom and conduct: lastly, in a time wherein he is in a condition of reaping the fruits of his studies and labours.

To instance only in the sciences, it is certain, that the best books which we have extant, were composed in those last ten years which the intemperate despise; and that men's minds growing to perfection, proportionably as their bodies grow old, arts and sciences would have lost a great deal of their perfection, if all the great men
who

who were professors of that, had lived ten years shorter than they did. For my part, I think it proper to keep the fatal day off my death as far off as I can. If this had not been my resolution, I should not have finished several pieces, which will be both pleasing and instructing to those who come after me.

The sensualists farther object, that it is impossible to live a regular life. To this I reply, that Galen, who was so great a man, made choice of it, and advised others to do the same, as being the best course they could take. Plato, Cicero, Isocrates, and a great many famous men 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 a man devoted to the administration of the government in public affairs, can hardly lead an exact and regular life, being often obliged in the service of the state, to be exposed

to the badness of weather, to the 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 that is in this post accustoms himself to a frugal way of living. There is no man, in what condition soever he is, but may prevent his over-eating, and cure himself of those distempers that are caused by repletion. 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 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, which preserves all beings as far as possible, teaches us how we ought to govern ourselves in such a case. It begins by depriving us altogether of our appetites, that we can eat little or nothing at all. At that time, whether the sick person has been sober or intemperate, no other

other food ought to be made use of, but such as is proper for the condition wherein he is; such as broth, jellies, cordials, barley-water, &c: When his recovery will permit him to make use of 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 has a perfect cure. Should he do otherwise, he would overburden nature, and infallibly relapse into the danger from whence he escaped. But, notwithstanding this, I dare aver, that he who leads a sober and regular life will hardly ever be sick; or if he is it will be but seldom, and for a short time. This way of living preserves us from those humours which occasion our infirmities, and by consequence heals us of all those distempers which they engender. The defect of the cause does physically prevent the production of the effect; and the effect cannot be dangerous and violent, when the cause itself is but slight and weak.

Since then sobriety lays a restraint upon our passions, preserves our health, and is both wholesome and beneficial to us, ought it not to be followed and embraced by all men? Self-love, if well understood, advises us to it: it is neither impossible nor difficult: and the method I take, ought to discourage no-body from undertaking it. For

I do not pretend to persuade every body to as little as I do, or to debar themselves from the use of a great many things from which I refrain. I eat but little, because my stomach is nice, and I abstain from certain dishes because they are prejudicial to me. They who are not offended by them, are not obliged to refrain from them, but are allowed the use of them; only they ought to abstain from eating too much, even of that which agrees with them, because it would be prejudicial to them, since an overcharged stomach cannot so easily digest it. In short, he that is offended at nothing, has no occasion of enquiring into the quality of his diet, he ought only to be cautious of the quantity thereof.

It signifies nothing to tell me, that there are several who deny themselves nothing, do yet live as long without infirmities as they who are sober. This is but rare, uncertain, hazardous, and, in a manner, miraculous. The instances of this nature do not at all justify the conduct of those persons, who reckon it an extraordinary happiness, and are commonly the betrayers of their good constitution. It is more certain, that an infirm old man will live longer by observing a strict regimen, than a young, vigorous, and healthful man will, that gives the loose to his appetite.

However,

However, this is certain, that a good constitution, with the support of a regular life, will carry a man farther than a weak one, though managed with an equal degree of care. God and nature may form bodies so strong and robust, as to be proof against all that is contrary to us; as I have observed at Venice, the procurator, Thomas Matereni, and at Padua the chevalier Antonico Capo di Vacca; but among a thousand ones shall hardly meet with the like. All others who are for a long and healthful life, who would die without an agony, and only by a pure dissolution, who would, lastly, enjoy the advantages of a happy old age, will never come to what they aim at, without sobriety.

It is temperance alone which supports our constitution, without any alteration; it creates nothing but sweet and wholesome humours, which, sending up no vapours to the brain, leave the mind the perfect use of the organs, and are no hinderance from raising its contemplation from the wonders of the world, to the consideration of the power of its Creator. A man can be never the better for those reflections, when his head is full of the vapours of wine and meat; but, when once these fumes are gone, his understanding is clear, he observes and discerns a thousand agreeable things, which he would not have known or comprehended

prehended in another state. He can then discern the fallacy of those pleasures which voluptuousness promises the real goods with which virtue loads us, and the unhappiness of those whom a fatal delusion renders slaves to their passions.

The three most dangerous, are, the pleasure of the taste, the hunting after honours, and the possession of riches: these desires increase with the age of old men; who having always led a disorderly life, have suffered their lusts to take root in their youth and manhood. A wise man does not stay so long before he corrects them; he declares betimes a war against his passions, of which he does not obtain the mastery till after after several struggles; and then virtue in its turn triumphs, and crowns the man with the blessings of heaven, and the esteem of all the world.

Is he ready to pay the tribute that is due to nature? full of acknowledgments for the favours already received from God, he throws himself into the arms of his future mercy. He is not afraid of those everlasting punishments which they deserve, who by their intemperance offer violence to their own lives. He dies without complaining, because he was not to live for ever; and his reason sweetens the bitterness of his fatality. In a word, he leaves the world generously, when in a long tract of

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happy

happy years he has had time enough to enjoy his virtue and reputation; and considers, that not one in a thousand, who have lived otherwise than he has done, has arrived at such an age.

He is comforted the more, upon considering, that this separation will not be violent, painful, or feverish. His end is calm, and he expires like a lamp when the oil is spent, no delirium, no convulsions attending him: and so he passes from this corruptible life, to that whose eternal happiness is the reward of the virtuous.

O happy, blessed, and regular life! how worthy art thou of our esteem; and how dost thou deserve to be preferred before thy contrary? We need only reflect upon the different effects of both, to be sensible of the advantages that attend thee; thy name alone is sufficient to attract that esteem which thou deservest.

Having thus given the reasons which made me abandon an intemperate, and take up with a sober life, as also the method I observed in it, and the benefit which I reaped from it, and the advantage which others may receive from the practice thereof; I shall now direct my discourse to those who suppose it to be no benefit to grow old because they fancy, that when a man past seventy, his life is nothing but weakness, infirmity and misery. In the first place

place, I can assure them, that they are mightily mistaken; and that I find myself, as 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 pleasures and business; 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 will tell you, that I am still so strong at fourscore and three, as to mount a horse without any help: that I cannot only go down stairs without any concern, but likewise descend a hill all on foot: 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 it is 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

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persons,

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 upon as the most convenient and most agreeable mansion in that city. I there make me apartments proper for the winter and summer, which serves 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 meet with some little thing or other to do, which, at the same time, employs and diverts 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. When I am there, I sometimes divert myself with a sport that agrees most with my age; *viz.* in going out with a setting-dog, or with terriers.

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

Through this villa runs a rivulet ; and the country about is enriched with fruitful and well cultivated fields, having at present a considerable number of inhabitants. This was not so anciently : it was a marshy place, and the air so bad, that it was more proper for frogs and toads, than for men to dwell in. I thought it advisable to drain the marsh-lands, so that being dry the air became more wholesome. Several families have settled there, and rendered the place very populous ; where, I may say, that I have dedicated to the Lord a church, altars, and hearts to worship him : which reflection is a great comfort to me as often as I make it.

Sometimes I pay a visit to my friends of the neighbouring towns, who procure me an acquaintance with the ingenious men of the place. I discourse with them about architecture, painting, sculpture, mathematics, and agriculture ; sciences for which I had all my life-long a great fondness, and the rather, because they were very much in esteem in my time.

I saw with curiosity the new pieces of workmanship ; and it was a new pleasure to me, to take a second view of those which I had already seen ; and I am always learning something that I am pleased to know.

I visit public buildings, palaces, gardens, antiquities, squares, churches, and fortifications ;

cations; passing by no place that may gratify my curiosity, or give me any new light into things.

That which charmed me most in the little journeys I took, was the various prospects of places through which I went: the plains, the hills, the rivulets, the castles, and the villages, were as so many objects that offered themselves with pleasure to my sight, and afforded a delightful view.

In short, the pleasures I take are not imperfect upon the account of the weakness of my organs: I see and hear as well as ever I did in my life: all my senses are as free, and as perfect as ever; especially my taste, which is better with that little which I eat at present, than when I was a slave to my appetite.

Changing of beds is no hinderance to my repose: I sleep very soundly, and if I dream, my dreams are pleasant.

It is with a great deal of satisfaction, that I see the end of a work of such importance to this state, which has rendered so many places fertile, that before were uncultivated and useless; a thing I never expected to have seen completed, considering how many states are loth to begin, and weary of carrying on, undertakings of so vast a charge, and so difficult to be performed. I was upon the places for two months together, with the commissaries that had the

the oversight of these works; and this during the greatest heat of the summer; and yet, thanks to my regimen, the only preserver of my health, neither the unwholesome air of the fens, nor the fatigue, did me any injury.

Such as these are the employments and diversions of my old age; which is, blessed be God, free from those disturbances of mind, and infirmities of body, under which so many poor rheumatic and crazy old men, as well as miserable young men labour.

If in discoursing on such a serious subject as this, it be allowable to speak of trifles, I might tell you that at the age of fourscore and three, a sober life had preserved me in that sprightliness of thought, and gaiety of humour, as to be able to compose a play for the use of the stage, which was diverting, without shocking the audience. Comedy is usually the product of youth, as tragedy is of old age. The latter, by the gravity of its composition, suiting to riper years; whilst the former, by its facetiousness, is more agreeable to those that are young. If antiquity has so far commended and admired a Greek poet, for having, in the seventy-third year of his age, composed a tragedy, which is a grave and serious poem, why should I be less admired, and happy in having composed a comedy, which

which is diverting at my age? for this I am sure of, that though that author was ten years younger than I am, yet he had not more health, nor a brisker genius.

To conclude, as an addition to my happiness, I see myself as it were immortalized, and born again by the great number of my descendants. I meet with not only two or three when I come home, but eleven grand-children, the eldest of which is eighteen, and the youngest two years old, all born of the same father and the same mother; all healthful, of good parts, and of promising hopes. I take a delight in playing with the youngsters; children between three and five years of age being generally very merry and diverting company. Those who are older, entertain me better: I often make them sing and play upon musical instruments, and sometimes I join in concert with them.

Call you this an infirm and 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, in reality, I would not change my age and life, for the most flourishing youth, which lays no restraint upon its senses, being sure that it is subject to a great many distempers, which may occasion death.

I remember all the follies that I was guilty of in my young days, and am perfectly

fectly sensible of the danger, and imprudence of them. I know with what violence young persons are carried away by their passions, and how much they presume upon their strength, but would think they had taken a sure lease of their life; they expose it rashly, as if it were chargeable to them, and they run head-long into whatever their concupiscence prompts them to. They must gratify their appetites whatever it cost them, without perceiving that they feed those ill humours which will render their lives miserable, and hasten the hour of their death.

Of these two, the one is cruel, the other dreadful and insupportable, by all sensual men, especially young people, who suppose they have a better title to life than others; and libertines, who are not so blind as to flatter themselves, that God will permit their sin to go unpunished.

As for my part, blessed be God, I find myself freed from those just fears which cannot but alarm them, whenever they are capable of reflection. For, in the first place, I am certain that I shall not fall sick, since I take care, by a regular diet, to ward off infirmities; and then, secondly, the time of my death approaching, teaches me to submit quietly to that which is inevitable, and from which no man could ever secure himself. It is folly to be afraid
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of that which cannot be avoided; but I hope, when ever the time comes, the merits of Jesus Christ will be available to me; though I am sensible that I must die, yet I am persuaded it will be a long time e're I shall, since this dissolution cannot happen, but by the consumption of the radical moisture which is exhausted by age.

The regular life which I lead has less death this only way of destroying me. The humours of my body can do me more injury, than the elementary qualities which prevailed in my nature ever since my birth. I am not so stupid as not to perceive, that having had a beginning, I must of necessity have an end; but since we must die, doubtless that death is attended with less terror which happens by the natural dissolution of the parts of which we are composed. Nature herself having tied the bands of our life, can likewise untie them again without the least pain, and can stay longer before it executes that office, than sicknesses generally do, which with violence break the bands of our life asunder, and which cannot happen to us but by foreign causes since nothing is more contrary to nature than that which tends to our destruction.

When a man draws near his end, he perceives his strength to abate by degrees the organs, and all the faculties grow weak he can no longer walk, and can hardly
speak

Speak: his judgment and memory fail him: he becomes blind, deaf, and bowed together; in fine, his whole frame is worn out. Blessed be God, I am not as yet in that condition. On the contrary, I promise myself, that my soul finds itself so well in my body, where she meets with nothing but peace, unity and concord (spite of all the different qualities of the humours which compose us, and the various inclinations that are produced by the senses), that she will be under no temptation to wish a speedy separation, and that it will be a long time before she can be brought to a resolution.

To conclude, I am assured that I shall still live several years in health, and that I shall long enjoy the pleasure of being in the world, which is certainly very comfortable, when a man knows how to make a right use of it. I hope to reap a greater satisfaction from hence in the other life, and I shall lie under obligations to the virtues of the regimen, to which I am indebted for the victory I have obtained over my passions. Nor is there any man but may hope for the same happiness, if he would live as I have done.

A sober life therefore being so necessary, its name so commendable, the enjoyment of it so beneficial, nothing remains, after what has been said, but to conjure all men, as they love themselves, to make the best
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of life, and to lay in a stock of that which being the most precious of all, deserves to be sought after, if we have it not, and to be preserved if we have it.

It is this divine sobriety which is always pleasing to God, and always the friend of nature; she is the daughter of reason, the sister of all other virtues, the companion of temperance; always chearful, always modest, always wise and regular in her operations. She is the root of health, of industry, and of whatever becomes a great soul to be employed about. She has the laws of God and nature, both to justify and enforce her. When she reigns, repletion, disorders, evil habits, superfluous humours, fevers, aches, and the fears of death, do not disrelish or embitter our pleasures.

The happiness of it should invite us, the comeliness of it should allure us to embrace it. She offers to us the duration of our mortal being: She is the faithful guardian of the life of man, whether he be rich or poor, young or old, of what sex soever. She teaches the rich not to abuse his wealth, the poor to bear patiently the inconveniences of his state: she teaches the man wisdom, the woman chastity; old men the secret of putting off their death, and young men the means of enjoying a long life. She files the rust off our senses, renders the body vigorous, the mind clear, the

the soul lovely ; gives us a happy memory, free motions, and just actions. It is by it that the mind, being disengaged from matter, enjoys a larger freedom, and the blood runs smoothly in our veins, without meeting with any obstruction in its circulation. It is lastly by it, that all the powers, both of soul and body, are kept up in a perfect union, which nothing but the contrary vice can disturb.

O sacred and healthful sobriety ! the powerful support of our nature, the true physic of body and mind. How ought men to praise thee, and acknowledge thy benefits, since thou furnishest them with the means of attaining heaven, and of preserving life and health here upon earth ?

But not designing to enlarge any farther in commendation of this virtue, I shall conclude, keeping within the bounds of sobriety on this subject ; not because I have said enough of it, but that I may say more of it another time.

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C H A P

C H A P. II.

The Method of correcting a bad Constitution..

SEVERAL persons, whose weak constitutions required great care in the management of it, having been well satisfied with what I have written concerning sobriety, the experience which they have had of the usefulness of my counsels, and the acknowledgments which they have made thereof, encourage me to take up my pen again, that I may convince those who meet with no inconvenience from intemperance, that they are in the wrong in relying so much on the strength of their constitution.

Let it be ever so well composed, yet it holds not good but to such an age. These persons seldom arrive to sixty, but they decay all of a sudden, and perceive themselves loaded with a complication of distempers. Some are gouty, dropfical, and rheumatistical: others are subject to cholics, the stone and piles; lastly, to abundance of distempers, which would never have happened to them, if they had been so wise as to have taken care of themselves in their youth. If they die infirm at fourscore years of age, they might have lived in health to an hundred,

dred, and so have run out the term of life which nature has left open to all men.

It is to be supposed that this common parent wishes that all her children might live at least a century; and since some among them have lived to a longer date, why should not others have a right of expecting the same advantage?

I do not disagree, but that we are subject to the stars which were predominant at our birth. Their good or bad aspects enfeeble or strengthen the springs of our life; but man being endued with judgment and reason, ought to repair, by his prudent conduct, the harm which his planet may have done him; he may prolong his days by the means of a sober life, to as long a period as if he had been born very strong and lusty. Prudence prevents and corrects the malignity of the planets; they give us certain inclinations, they carry us out to certain passions; but they lay no violence upon us; we may resist them, and in this sense a wise man is above the stars.

I was born very choleric and hasty; I flew out into a passion for the least trifle; I huffed all mankind, and was so intolerable, that a great many persons of repute avoided my company. I apprehended the injury which I did myself; I knew that anger is a real frenzy: that it disturbs our judgment, that it transports us beyond ourselves,

selves, and that the difference between a passionate and a mad man, is only this, that the latter has lost his reason for ever, and the former only deprived of it by fits. A sober life cured me of this frenzy; by its assistance I became so moderate, and so much a master of my passion, that nobody could perceive that it was born with me.

A man may likewise with reason, and a regular life, correct a bad constitution; and notwithstanding the tenderness thereof, may live a long time in good health. I should never have seen forty years had I followed all my inclinations; and yet I am in the eighty-sixth year of my age. If the long and dangerous distempers which I had in my youth, had not consumed a great deal of the radical moisture, the loss of which is irreparable, I might have promised myself to have lived a complete century. But, without flattering myself, I find it to be a great matter to have arrived to forty-six years more than I ever expected, and that in my old age my constitution is still so good, that not only my teeth, my voice, my memory, and my heart, are in as good a condition as ever they were in the briskest days of my youth, but likewise my judgment has lost nothing of its clearness and force.

I am of the opinion, that this proceeds from the abridgment I make of my food, proportionably

proportionably to my growing into years. Experience, which tells us that infants have a greater appetite, and are more often hungry than grown men, ought likewise to teach us, that in old age we have less need of nourishment than in the beginning of our life. A man who is very old can hardly eat, because he can scarce digest what he eats; a little serves his turn, and the yolk of an egg is a good meal to him. I shall be satisfied therewith to the end of my days, hoping, by this conduct, neither to die with violence nor with pain, not questioning, but that they who would imitate me will meet with as easy an exit, since we are all of the same species, and made up of the same materials.

Since nothing then is more advantageous for a man upon earth than to live long, he is obliged to preserve his health as far as possible; and this he cannot do without sobriety. It is true, indeed, that there are several who eat and drink plentifully, and yet live to an hundred years of age. It is by their example that others flatter themselves with the hopes of attaining to the same age, without any occasion of laying a restraint upon themselves. But they are in the wrong upon these two accounts. First, because there is hardly one in a thousand that has so strong a constitution. Secondly, because such men do generally end their

lives by such distempers, as put them into great agonies by dying, which would never happen to those that have the same government of themselves that I have. A man runs the risque of not attaining to fifty years of age, for not daring to undertake a regular course of life; which is no impossible thing, since it is what I and severall others have practised, and do practise. And a man becomes insensibly a murderer off himself; because he cannot be persuaded, that, notwithstanding the false charms of a voluptuous life, a wise man ought not too look upon it as any hardship to put in practice what his reason advises him.

Reason, if we hearken to it, will tell us, that a good regimen is necessary for the prolonging of our days; and that it consists in two things: first, in taking care of the quality, and, secondly, of the quantity; so as to eat and drink nothing that offends the stomach, nor any more than what we can easily digest. Our experience ought to be our guide in these two principles, when we are arrived to forty, fifty, or threescore years of age. He who puts in practice that knowledge which he has of what is good for him, and goes on in a frugal way of living, keeps the humours in a just temperature, and prevents them from being altered; though he suffer heat and cold, tho' he be fatigued, though his sleep be

be broke, provided there be no excess in any of them. This being so, what an obligation does a man lie under of living soberly? and ought he not to free himself from the fears of sinking under the least intemperature of the air, and under the least fatigue, which make us sick upon every slight occasion?

It is true, indeed, the most sober may sometimes be indisposed, when they are unavoidably obliged to transgress the rules which they have been used to observe: but then they are certain, that their indisposition will not last above two or three days at most; nor can they fall into a fever. Weariness and faintness are easily remedied by rest and good diet. The malignancy of the stars cannot put the malignant humours in a ferment in bodies which have them not: tho' distempers which proceed from intemperance, have an internal cause, and may be dangerous, those which are derived from the influence of the planets, affect us only externally, and cannot produce any great disorders.

There are some who feed high, and maintain, whatsoever they eat is so little a disturbance to them, that they cannot perceive in what part of their body their stomach lies: But I aver, that they do not speak as they think; nor is it natural. It is impossible, that any created being should be

be of so perfect a composition, as that neither heat or cold, dry or moist, should have any influence over it; and that the variety of food which they make use of, of different qualities, should be equally agreeable to them. Those men cannot but acknowledge, that they are sometimes out of order: if it is not owing to a sensible indigestion, yet they are troubled with head-achess, want of sleep and fevers, of which they are cured by a diet, and taking such medicines as are proper for evacuation. It is therefore certain, that their distempers proceed from repletion, or from their having eat or drank something which did not agree with their stomachs.

Most old people excuse their high feeding, by saying, that it is necessary for them to eat a great deal, to keep up their natural heat, which diminishes proportionably as they grow in years; and, to create an appetite, it is requisite to find out proper sauces, and to eat whatever they have fancy for; and that without thus humouring their palates, they should be soon in their graves. To this I reply, that nature for the preservation of a man in years, has so composed him, that he may live with little food; that his stomach cannot digest a great quantity; and that he has no need of being afraid of dying for want of eating; since, when he is sick, he is forced to have recourse

recourse to a regular sort of diet, which is the first and main thing prescribed him by his physicians. Lastly, that if this remedy is of such efficacy as to snatch us out of the arms of death, it is a mistake to suppose, that a man may not, by eating a little more than he does when he is sick, live a long time without ever being sick.

Others had rather be disturbed twice or thrice a-year with the gout, the sciatica, and other epidemical distempers, than to be always put to the torment and mortification of laying a restraint upon their appetites; being sure, that when they are indisposed, a regular diet will be an infallible remedy and cure. But let them be informed by me, that as they grow up in years, their natural heat abates: that a regular diet, despised as a precaution, and only looked upon as physic, cannot always have the same effect or force to draw off the crudities, and repair the disorders, which are caused by repletion; and lastly, that they run the hazard of being cheated, by their hope and their intemperance.

Others say, that it is more eligible to feed high, and enjoy themselves, tho' a man lives the less while. It is no surprising matter, that fools and madmen should contemn and despise life; the world would be no loser whenever they go out of it: but it is a considerable loss, when wise, virtuous,

tuous, and holy men drop into the grave. If one of them were a bishop, he might have been an archbishop in growing olden; if he were in some considerable post in the state, he might have arrived to the highest; if he were learned, or excelled in any art, he would have been more excellent, and done more honour to his country and himself.

Others there are, who perceiving themselves to grow old, tho' their stomach becomes less capable of digesting well every day than other, yet will not, upon that account, abate any thing of their diet. They only abridge themselves in the number of their meals; and because they find two or three times a-day is troublesome, they think their health is sufficiently provided for, by making only one meal; that so the time between one repast and another, may (as they say) facilitate the digestion of those aliments, which they might have taken at twice: for this reason they eat at this one meal so much, that their stomach is overcharged, and out of order, and converts the superfluities of its nourishment into bad humours, which engender disease and death. I never knew a man that lived long by this conduct. These men would doubtless have prolonged their days, had they abridged the quantity of their ordinary food, proportionably as they grew in years.

years, and had they eaten a great deal less, and a little oftener.

Some again are of opinion, that sobriety may indeed preserve a man in health, but does not prolong his life: to this we say, that there have been persons in past ages, who have prolonged their lives by this means; and some there are at present, who still do: it shortens our days, as the infirmities contracted by repletion do. A man of an ordinary reach may perceive, that, if he desires to live long, it is better to be well than sick; and that, consequently, temperance contributes more to a long life, than an excessive feeding.

Whatsoever the sensualist may say, temperance is of infinite benefit to mankind: to it he owes his preservation: it banishes from his mind the dismal apprehension of dying: it is by its means that he becomes wise, and arrives to an age, wherein reason and experience furnish him with assistance, to free himself from the tyranny of his passions, which have lorded it over him for almost the whole course of his life. O sacred and beneficent temperance! how much am I obliged to thee, for seeing the time which has so many charms, when one follows thy maxims, and observes those rules which thou dost prescribe? when I denied my senses nothing, I did not taste such pure and refined pleasures as I now enjoy.

They

They were then so troublesome, and mixed with pains, that even in the height of those enjoyments, the bitterness exceeded the sweetness of them.

O happy state of life! which, besides other blessings with which thou favourest an old man, dost preserve his stomach in its perfect a tone, as to make him relish a piece of dry bread, better than the voluptuous do all their dainty morsels, and best seasoned dishes. The appetite which thou givest us for bread, is just and reasonable, since it is the most proper food for mankind, when attended with a desire of eating. A sober life is never without such an appetite. See that, by eating a little, my stomach is often craving after the manna, which I sometimes relish with so much pleasure, that I should think I trespass upon the duty of temperance, did I not know that one must eat it to support life, and that one cannot make use of a plainer, and a more natural diet.

My spirits are not injured by what I eat; they are only revived and supported by it. I always find myself in an even temper, always chearful, and more so after than before meals. I use myself, presently upon rising from the table, to write or study, and never find that this application of mind, after eating, is prejudicial to me: or, I am equally capable at all times of doingg

doing it, and never perceive myself drowsy as a great many people do. The reason of this is, because the little I eat is not sufficient to send up the fumes from the stomach to the head, which fill the brain, and render it incapable of performing its functions.

What I eat, is as follows; *viz.* bread, soup, new-laid eggs, veal, kid, mutton, partridges, pullets and pigeons. Among the sea-fish, I chuse goldenis, and of the river-fish, the pike. All these aliments are proper for old men; who if they be "wise for themselves," would be contented with these, and seek for no other.

A poor old man, who has not wherewith to purchase all these, should be satisfied with bread, broth and eggs; and there is no man, how poor soever he be, that can stand in want of this food, unless they be downright beggars, reduced to live upon alms, of whom I do not pretend to say any thing. The reason of their being so miserable in their old age, is, because they were idle and lazy when they were young; it were better for them to die than to live, for they are a burden to the world. But this we say, that another man in low circumstances, who has only bread, broth and eggs, ought not to eat much of them at a time, but so to regulate himself, with respect to the quantity of his diet, as that he

may not die but by a mere dissolution. For it is not to be supposed that a stab or the like, is only the violent death; fevers, and a great many other distempers, of which one dies in bed, are to be counted as such, being caused by those humours, against which nature would not struggle, if they were natural.

What difference then is there between a sober and an intemperate life? the one shortens, the other prolongs our days, and makes us enjoy a perfect health. How many of my relations and friends has intemperance carried off, who would have been still alive, had they followed my counsel? but it has not been able to destroy me as it has so many others; and because I have the power of resisting its charms, I am still in the land of the living, and am arrived to a good old age.

If I had not abandoned thee, thou infamous source of corruption, I should never have had the pleasure of seeing eleven of my grand-children, all of them witty and promising; nor beheld the ornaments which I have made to my houses and gardens. But thou, O cruel intemperance! dost often put an end to the days of thy slaves before they could have finished what thee begun. They dare not undertake anything that requires time to complete it, and should they be so happy, as to see thee

their works brought to perfection, yet they do not long enjoy the fruit of their labours. But to shew what thou really art, *viz.* a deadly poison, the most dangerous enemy of mankind, and wishing that all men may conceive a just abhorrence for thee, I promise myself, that my eleven grand children will declare war against thee, and, following my example, will convince all mankind of the abuse of thy cravings, and of the usefulness of a regular course of life.

I cannot understand how it comes to pass that so many people, otherwise prudent and rational, cannot resolve upon laying a restraint upon their insatiable appetites, at fifty or threescore years of age, or at least when they begin to feel the infirmities of old age coming upon them. They might rid themselves of them by a strict diet, and become incurable, because they will not observe a regimen. I do not wonder so much that young people are so hardly brought to such a resolution: they are not capable enough of reflecting, and their judgment is not solid enough to resist the charms of sense: but at fifty a man ought to be governed by his reason, which would convince us, if we would hearken to it, that to gratify all our appetites, without any rule or measure, is the way to become *infirm*, and to die young. Nor does the pleasure of taste last long; it hardly begins,

but it is gone and past: the more one eats,, the more one may; and the distempers which it brings along with it lasts us too our graves. Now, should not a sober man be very well satisfied, when he is at table,, upon the assurance that, as often as he rises from it, what he eats will do him no harm??

I was willing to add this supplement too my treatise; it is short, and runs upon other arguments: the reason of my casting them into two chapters, is, because the reader will be better pleased to peruse them at twice, than at once. I wish all the world were so curious as to peruse both, and be the better for them.

C H A P. III.

A letter to Signior Barbaro, Patriarch of Aquileia; concerning the method of enjoying a complete happiness in old age.

IT must needs be owned, that the mind of man is one of the greatest works of God, and that it is the master-piece of the divine architect. Is it not something surprising to be able, by writing, to keep up a correspondence with one's friends at a distance? and is not our nature of a wonderful composition, which affords us the means of seeing one another with the eyes of our imagination, as I, sir, behold you at present?

sent? it is after this manner that I shall enter into discourse with you, and relate to you several pleasing and profitable things.

It is true, indeed, that what I have to tell you is no news, with respect to the subject matter thereof; but I never told it you at the age of ninety-one years. It is somewhat astonishing, that I am able to tell you, that my health and strength are in so good a plight, that instead of diminishing with my age, they seem to increase as I grow old. All mine acquaintance are surprized at it; and I, who know to what I am indebted for this happiness, do every where declare the cause of it. I endeavour all I can to convince all mankind that a man may enjoy a complete happiness in this world, after the age of fourscore, and this cannot be attained without continence and sobriety, which are two virtues precious in the eyes of God, because they are enemies to our sensual appetites, and friends to our preservation.

Be pleased then, sir, to know, that for some days past, several doctors of our university, as well physicians philosophers, came to be informed by me of the method I took in my diet, having understood that I was still healthful and strong; that I had my senses perfect; that my memory, my heart, my judgment, the tone of my voice, and my teeth, were all as sound as in my youth;

that I wrote seven or eight hours a-day with my hand, and spent the rest of the day in walking out a foot, and in taking all the innocent pleasures that are allowed too 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 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 could write upon subjects which required a great and earnest application of mind, and which were so far from fatiguing, that they diverted me. You need not question, but that taking up my pen too have the honour of entertaining you to day, the pleasure which I conceive in such an employment, is more pleasing and delightful to me than those which I am used too take.

Those doctors told me, that I ought not to be looked upon as an old man, since all my works and employments were such as were proper for a youth, and did by no means resemble the works of men advanced in years; who are capable of doing nothing after fourscore, who are loaded with infirmities and distempers, who are perpetually languishing and in pain.

That

That if there be any of them who are less infirm, yet their senses are decayed; their sight and hearing fails them, their legs tremble, and their hands shake; they can no longer walk, nor are they capable of doing any thing: and should there chance be to one that is free from those disasters, his memory decreases, his spirits sink, and his heart fails him; in short, he does not enjoy a life so perfectly as I do. What they wondered at most, was a thing that is really surprizing. It is this, that by an invincible sort of antipathy, I cannot drink any wine whatsoever, during the months of July and August every year. I have so great an aversion to it, that I should certainly die, did I but force myself to drink any; for neither my stomach, nor my palate can bear it; so that wine being as it were mother's-milk to old men, it seems as if I could not possibly preserve my life without that nourishment. My stomach then being deprived of a help so useful and proper for the maintaining the heat thereof, I could eat but very little, which, about the middle of August, brought me so low and weak, that jelly-broths and cordials could not keep up my spirits. However, this weakness is not attended with any pain, or pernicious accident. Our doctors were of opinion, that if the new wine, which restores me perfectly to my health in the
beginning

beginning of September, were not made at that time, I could never escape death. They were no less surprized to see, that in three or four days time, new wine will restore to me that strength which I had lost by drinking of the old; a thing of which they were witnesses these several days past when they saw me in those two different circumstances, without which they could never have believed it.

Several physicians were pleased to prognosticate to me, ten years ago, that it was impossible for me to hold out two or three years longer with this pernicious antipathy; 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 receive 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 upon that head. It must be acknowledged, my lord, that eloquence has a great deal of force upon the mind of man, since it often persuades him to believe that which never was, and never could be. I was very much pleased to hear them discourse; and could it be helped, 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. These are two infallible means of acquiring a clear sight into things; 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 to instruct them better, I replied, that their way of arguing was wrong: 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, judgment, a mind and reason: that we are all born with these same faculties of the soul; because God was pleased that we should all of us 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 upon us this reason, and this judgment, to preserve our lives, so that this grace proceeds immediately from God, and not from nature, or the stars: that man, when he is young, being more subject to his sense than to his reason, gives himself up wholly to his pleasures; and that when he is arrived to forty or fifty years of age, he ought to know that he is in the midst of his life, thanks to the goodness of his constitution, which has carried him so far: but
that

that when he is arrived to this period, he goes down the hill apace to meet his death, of which the infirmities of old age are the fore-runners: that old age is as different from youth, as a regular life is opposite to intemperance: that it is necessary for him at that age, to change his course of life, especially with respect to the quantity and the quality of his diet, because it is on that the health and length of our days do radically depend. That lastly, if the former part of our lives were altogether sensual, then the latter to be rational and regular order being necessary for the preservation of all things, especially the life of man, as may be perceived by those inconveniences that are caused by excess, and by the healthfulness of those that observe a strict regimen. In truth, my lord, it is impossible for them, who will always gratify their taste, and their appetite, not to break their constitution; and that I might not break mine, when I was arrived to maturity, I entirely devoted myself to a sober life. It is true, it was not without some reluctance that I entered upon the resolution, and abandoned my profuse way of living. I began with praying to God, that he would grant me the gift of temperance; and was fully persuaded, that how difficult soever any undertaking be which a man sets about, he will attain his end, if he has but resolution

resolution enough to conquer the obstacles to his design. By this means I rooted out my evil habits, and contracted good ones; so that I used myself to a course of life, which was by so much the more severe and austere, by how much the more my constitution was become very weak when I began it. In short, my lord, when they had heard my reasons, they were forced to submit to them.

The youngest among them told me, that he agreed that this favour might be universal to all men, but that it was very rarely efficacious, and that I must needs have a more especial and victorious grace, to get above the delights and customs of an easy life, and embrace one that was quite contrary to it: that he did not look upon it to be impossible, since my practice convinced him of the contrary, but however it seemed to him to be very difficult.

I replied to him, that it was a shame to relinquish a good undertaking upon the account of difficulties that might attend it, and that the more we met with, the more glory should we acquire: that it is the will of the Creator, that every one should attain to a long life, to which he has appointed man; because in his old age, he might be freed from the bitter fruits that were produced by sense, and might enjoy the good effects of his reason; that when he shakes
hands

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 by a pure dissolution, which only ought to be called a natural death, all others being violent, and brought upon men by repletion and excess. That, lastly, God is willing that man should pass by so sweet and easy a 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 fatal day cannot be far from me; that as certainly as I was born so I must die, and that many thousands of younger persons than myself are departed this life before me. Nor am I afraid of the terrors of hell, because I am a christian, and put my trust in the mercy and merits of the blood of Jesus Christ: lastly, I hope that so pleasant a life as mine, will be followed by as happy a death.

To this the young gentleman replied not a word, 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 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 sobriety, and that I have lost my time in endeavouring to persuade men to the practice of that which is impossible: that my advices will prove as useless as the laws which Plato would have established in his commonwealth, the execution of which was so difficult, that he could never prevail upon any man to receive them; and that what I have written upon this subject, will meet with no better success. I find this comparison is by no means just, since I practised what I teach a great many years before I wrote upon it; that I would never have put pen to paper, had I not known by my own experience, that this practice was not impossible; that it is likewise very useful, and very prudent; and this was the motive which prevailed upon me to publish it. In a word, I have been the occasion of a great many persons practising it, who find themselves the better for so doing: so that the

laws of Plato have no resemblance to the advices which I give. But such performers who deny themselves nothing, that they may gratify their sense, do not care to give me their approbation. However, I pity these men, though they deserve, for their intemperance, to be tormented in their old days with a complication of distempers and to be the victims of their passions whole eternity. I am, &c.

C H A P. IV.

Of the birth and death of man.

THAT 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 the enjoyment of life affords I will again write, to inform those who do not know me, of what they who are acquainted with me, have known and seen. What I am going to say will be looked upon as impossible, or incredible; but, at the same time, nothing is more certain; it being what a great many know, and what is worthy to be admired by all posterity. I am now ninety-five years of age, and firm myself as healthful and brisk, and as airy as if I were but twenty-five years old.

Whaa

What ingratitude should I be guilty of, did I not return thanks to the divine goodness for all his mercies reached out unto 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 fancy of it, that it is a hard matter to divert them but for a moment from that doleful thought. Blessed be God! I am free from their ills and terrors. It is my opinion, that I ought not as yet 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 the birth of man, and end with his death.

I say then, that some bodies are born with so bad a constitution, that they live but few days, or months. Whether this proceeds from the bad constitutions of the parents, or from the influences of the stars, or from a weakness of nature, which derives this defect from some foreign cause, is hard to determine: for it is not likely, that nature, as she is the common parent of all mankind, should be guilty of over-

fondness to some of her children, and cruelty towards others.

Since we are not able to discover the true reason from whence the shortness of our lives proceeds, it is in vain to enquire into the cause of it. It is enough to know that there are bodies which die almost as soon as they are born.

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 get to be old: but then they are decrepit and unhealthful (as hath been already observed), bringing upon themselves all the distempers they labour under, because they trusted too much to the strength of their constitution. They are unwilling to alter their course of life and make no difference between their being old and young; as if they were to be as vigorous at fourscore, as in the flower of their days. By this means, they never correct their conduct, nor make any reflection that they are old; that their constitution decays; that their stomach loses every day something of its natural heat; and for that reason, they ought to be more careful both of the quality and quantity of what

they

they eat and drink. They are of opinion, that a man's strength impairing as he grows into years, he ought to repair and support it by a greater quantity of food: they fancy, that to eat a great deal preserves their lives; but therein they are mistaken: for the natural heat beginning to decay, they overcharge it with too much food; and prudence requires, that a man should proportion his diet to his digestive faculties. This is certain, that the peccant humours proceed only from an imperfect digestion; and there is but a little good chyle made, when the stomach is charged with fresh aliments, before it has thrown off the former meal's meat into the intestines. It cannot then be urged too often, that when the natural heat begins to decay, it is necessary for the preservation of health, to abate the quantity of what one eats and drinks every day; nature requiring but very little for the support of the life of man, especially that of an old man.

However, instead of taking this course, most old people continue to live as they did formerly. If they had stinted themselves in time, they would at least have arrived to my years, and enjoyed as long a life as myself, since they brought into the world a strong constitution. They might have lived so long at least, I say; for they might have arrived to sixscore, as a great

many others who lived soberly have done, whom we have known ourselves, or have heard of by tradition; provided always, that they had as happy a constitution as those people. Had I been as well made, I would not question but I might prolong my days to that date; but because I was born with a tender constitution, I cannot hope to live above a century: and even they who are of no stronger a make than myself, may, by living soberly, as I do, easily attain to the same period.

Nothing seems more delightful than this certainty of a long life; whilst the rest of mankind, who observe not the rules of sobriety, are not sure of seeing the next day. This expectation of a long life, is founded on such natural consequences as can never fail. It is next to impossible, that he who leads a regular and sober life, should fall sick, or die a natural death, before the time that nature has prescribed: I say, he cannot die before that time: because a sober life prevents that corruption which feeds our distempers, which cannot be produced without a cause; and if there is no bad one reigning, there can be no fatal effect or violent death.

There is no question to be made, but that a regular life puts at distance the sad hour of our death, since it is able to keep the humours in an exact temperature
whereas

whereas, on the contrary, gluttony and drunkenness disturbs, heats, and puts them into a ferment; which is the origin of catarrhs, fevers, and almost all the accidents which hurry us to our graves.

However, though sobriety, which preserves us from abundance of disasters, may repair what excess has impaired, yet it must not be supposed that it will make a man immortal. It is impossible, but that time, which effaces all things, should likewise destroy the most curious workmanship of nature. That which had a beginning, must needs have an end; but man ought to end his days by a natural death, that is, without any pain; as they will see me die, when the radical moisture shall be quite exhausted.

I find this principle of life still so perfect in me, that I promise myself still to be at some distance from my last day; and I fancy I am not mistaken; because I am healthful and brisk, relish all I eat, sleep quietly, and, in a word, none of my senses fail me. I have still a lively fancy, a happy memory, a sound judgment, a strong heart; and my voice is more tuneable than ever, tho' the first organ that fails, so that I can chant forth my office every morning, without any prejudice to my lungs, and more easily than I could in my youth.

All

All these are infallible signs, that I have a great while still to live; but that my life shall end whenever it pleases God. How glorious will it then be, having been attended with all the happiness this world can afford, since age has freed me from the slavery of my passions? a prudent and regular old age conquers and eradicates them; prevents them from bringing forth any envenomed fruits, and changes all the ill thoughts which youth inspires into those that are good.

Being no longer a slave to sense, I am not troubled with the thoughts that my soul shall one day be separated from the body. I am no longer disturbed with anxious fears and racking cares, nor vexed at the loss of that which is not really mine. The death of my friends and relations, occasions no other grief in me than that of the first movement of nature, which cannot be avoided, but is of no long continuance.

I am still less moved at the loss of any temporal good, so afflictive to a great many persons. This is only the happiness of those that grow old by sobriety, and not of those persons, who, by virtue of a strong constitution, arrive to such an age, notwithstanding their excesses. The one enjoys a foretaste of heaven, even in this world, whilst the others cannot relish any pleasure, without

without a great deal of trouble. Who would not think himself happy at my age, never to be sensible of the least inconvenience? a happiness which seldom attends the most flourishing youth. There are none of them but what are subject to a thousand disorders, which I know nothing of: on the contrary, I enjoy a thousand pleasures, which are as pure as they are calm.

The first of these, is to be serviceable to my country; and how does this pleasure innocently please my vanity! when I reflect how I have furnished my countrymen with useful means, both of fortifying their city, and their port: that these works will subsist for many ages, that they will conduce to the making of Venice a famous republic, a rich and matchless city, and serve to eternize its fair title of being queen of the sea.

I have likewise the satisfaction of having afforded to her inhabitants the means of obtaining always plenty of all things, necessary for life, by manuring untilled lands, draining the marshes, by laying under water, and fattening the fields which were barren by reason of the dryness of the soil, which would otherwise have been a work of time.

In short I have rendered the city wherein I was born, stronger, richer, and more beautiful

beautiful than ever, as also the air more wholesome; all which is to my credit, and nothing hinders me from enjoying the glory which is due unto me.

My misfortunes having robbed me of a considerable estate whilst I was young, I knew how to make amends for that loss by my care; so that without the least wrong done to any person, and without any other trouble, than that of giving forth the orders that were necessary, I have doubled my income, and shall leave to my grandchildren twice the estate that I had by inheritance from my ancestors.

One satisfaction which pleases me more than all the rest, is, that what I have written concerning sobriety, is of great use to many, who loudly proclaim how highly they are obliged to me for that work: several of them having sent me word from foreign parts, that, under God, they have been indebted to me for their lives.

I have likewise another satisfaction, the deprivation of which would very much disturb me; which is, that I write and draw with my hand, all that is proper for my buildings, and for the conduct of my domestic affairs.

I likewise frequently converse with men of learning, from whom I daily receive new notices. And it is a wonder, that, at my age, I should have so quick parts, as to learn

learn and comprehend the most refined and difficult of sciences.

But that which makes me look upon myself as one of the happiest of men, is, that I in some measure enjoy two sorts of lives; the one terrestrial, with respect to the actions of my body; and the other divine and celestial, by the pleasures of the mind; which are attended with a great many charms, when founded on reasonable objects, and a moral assurance of the infinite good things which the divine bounty prepares for us.

I enjoy then perfectly the pleasures of this mortal life. Thanks to sobriety, which is extremely grateful to God, as being the guardian of virtue, and an irreconcilable enemy to vice; and, by way of foretaste, I enjoy eternal life, by contemplating so often on the happiness thereof, that I can hardly think upon any thing else. I look upon death as the necessary passage to heaven, and 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 charm and infatuate the greatest part of mankind. The deprivation of those pleasures to which I was most addicted, gives me no disquiet; on the contrary, the loss of them raises my joy, since it is to be the beginning of a life incomparably more happy.

Who

Who then would be troubled, if he were in my place? however, there is not a man but may hope for the like happiness, if he would live as I do. For, in short, I am neither saint nor angel, but only a man, the servant of God, to whom a sober and regular life is so grateful, that even in this world he rewards those who practise it.

If all they who retire into monasteries, to lead there a penitent life, a life of prayer and contemplation, would, to all their virtues, add the prudence of abridging themselves in their diet, they would become more deserving, and more venerable.

They would be looked upon as saints, by persevering in their austerities, and esteemed as those old patriarchs, and ancient hermits, who observed a constant sobriety, and lived so long a time. They might very probably obtain, at the age of sixscore, so much grace, as to be able to work miracles, which they could not do for want of such a perfection, to which they could not arrive before that time. And besides this privilege, which is almost an infallible mark of predestination, they would be in constant health, which is as rarely to be met with in the old age of the most pious monks, as in that of the greatest part off of the wisest worldlings.

Several of those monks fancy, that God does on purpose annex infirmities to old age,

age, to serve instead of penance imposed for the sins committed in their youth. But therein, as I think, they are very much mistaken. For I cannot imagine how God, who loves mankind, can be delighted in their sufferings. It is the devil and sin which brings all the evils we suffer upon our heads, and not God, who is our Father and Creator. He desires that mankind should be happy, both in this, and the other world; 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 the truly pious were sober, Christendom would be as full of saints as in the primitive times; nay, they would be more numerous, because the number of christians is increased since that time. How many venerable doctors might edify others by their wholesome preachings and good examples? how many sinners might receive benefit by their intercessions? how many blessings might they shower upon the earth? these monks in observing the maxims which I profess, need not fear acting contrary to those of their rule.

There is not one that forbids them the use of bread, wine and eggs; some also permit them to eat flesh. Besides these things, they make use of fallads, pulse,
G fruit,

fruit, cakes, which are prejudicial to some stomachs. Because these messes are offered to them in the refectory, they may perhaps be afraid of transgressing their rule if they should abstain from them. However, they would have done better, if, thirty years ago, they had abstained from that diet, and contented themselves with bread, wine, broths and eggs, which are the best food a tender body can take. Would not this be better than the nourishment of the ancient fathers in the desert, who drank nothing but fair water, did eat only wild fruit, herbs, and raw roots, yet lived a long time without infirmities? our Anchoretss would likewise find a more easy way to heaven, than those of Thebais.

I will conclude all with saying, that since extreme old age may be so useful and pleasant to men, I should have failed in point of charity, had I not taken care to inform them by what methods they might prolong their days. I have had no other motive in writing upon this subject, than that of engaging them to practise, all their lives, a virtue which would bring them, like me, to a happy old age, in which I will not cease to cry, live, live long, to the end you may serve God, and be fit for the glory which he prepares for his elect.

C H A P. V.

Being a letter from a nun of Padua, the grand-daughter of LEWIS CORNARO.

LEWIS CORNARO was, by the ill conduct of some of his relations, deprived of the dignity of a noble Venetian, of which he was possessed, and which he deserved for his virtues, and by his birth. He was not banished from his country, but was free to remain in Venice, if he pleased; but seeing himself excluded from all the public employments of the republic, he retired to Padua, where he took up his residence.

He married at Udine, a city of Friuli; his wife's name was Veronica, of the family of the Spilenbergs. She was a long time barren, and, as he ardently wished for children, he neglected nothing which might give him that satisfaction. At last, after many vows, prayers and remedies, his wife became pregnant, and was delivered of a daughter, who was named Clara, because of the devotion which each of them had for St Francis.

This was an only daughter, and was married to John Cornaro, son of Fantin, of the family of that name, which was dis-

tinguished by the surname of Cornaro del Episcopia. It was a very powerful family, before the loss which Christendom suffered by losing the kingdom of Cyprus, where that family had a considerable estate.

Clara had eleven children, eight sons, and three daughters. LEWIS CORNARO had also the pleasure to see himself, as it were, revived by miracle, in a great number of successors; for though he was very ancient when Clara came into the world, yet he lived to see her very old, and his offspring to the third generation.

CORNARO was a man of understanding, merit and courage. He loved glory, and was naturally liberal, nevertheless without profuseness. His youth was infirm; being very passionate and hasty; but when he perceived what damage the vices of his temper caused him, he resolved to correct them, and had strength enough over himself to conquer his passion, and those extravagant humours to which he was subject. After this glorious victory, he became so moderate, mild, and affable, that he gained the esteem and friendship of all that knew him.

He was extraordinary sober, and observed the rules which he mentions in his writings, and dieted himself always with so much wisdom and precaution, that finding his natural heat decaying by degrees, in
hiss

his old age, he also diminished his diet by degrees, so far as to stint himself to the yolk of an egg for a meal, and sometimes, a little before his death, it served him for two meals.

By this means he preserved his health, and was also vigorous, to the age of an hundred years; his mind did not decay; he never had need of spectacles, neither lost he his hearing.

And that which is no less true than difficult to believe, is, that he preserved his voice so clear and harmonious, that at the end of his life he sung, with as much strength and delight, as he did at the age of twenty-five years.

He had foreseen that he should live long without any infirmity, and was not deceived in it. When he felt that his last hour drew near, he disposed himself to leave this life with the piety of a christian, and the courage of a philosopher. He made his will, and set all his affairs in order; after which he received the last sacraments, and expected death patiently in an elbow-chair. In short, it may be said, that being in good health, feeling no manner of pain, having also his mind and eye very brisk, a little fainting fit took him, which was instead of an agony, and made him fetch his last breath. He died at Padua the 26th of

April, 1566, and was buried the 8th of My following.

His wife died some years after him. Her life was long, and her old age as happy as that of her spouse, only her latter days were not altogether like his. Some time before her death, she was seized with a lingering distemper, which brought her to her grave. She gave up her soul one night in her bed without any convulsive motions, and with so perfect tranquillity, she left this life without being perceived.

This is all I can say of those good people, by the idea which remains of them, from what I heard my deceased father, and some other friends of LEWIS CORNARO, say of them, who having lived so long after an extraordinary manner, deserve not to die so soon in the memory of man.

C H A P. VI.

Authorities taken from the history of M. de Thou, and the dialogues of Cardan, concerning the method of prolonging a man's life, and preserving his health.

THE extract of the 38th book of the history of Mr president de Thou runs thus:

“ LEWIS;

“ LEWIS CORNARO was an extraordinary and admirable instance of a long life; for he lived an hundred years, healthful in body and sound in mind. He was descended from one of the most illustrious families of Venice; but, thro’ some misfortune owing to his birth, he was excluded from all honours and publick employments in the state. He marry’d at Udine, in Friuli, one Veronica, of the family of Spilemburg; and being in possession of a good estate, he was very desirous of having children to inherit it. In short, what by the prayers he put up, and by the help of physicians, he conquer’d the point; and his wife, whom he dearly lov’d, and who was pretty well gone in years, was brought to bed of a daughter, when he least of all expected it. This daughter, named Clara, was married to John, the son of Fantini Cornaro, a rich family of Cyprus, by whom she had eight sons, and three daughters.

“ In a word, LEWIS CORNARO, by his sobriety, and the regimen he observed in his diet, corrected the infirmities he had contracted by intemperance in his youth; and, by the strength of his reason, moderated his inclination and propensity to anger: so that in his old age he had as good a constitution of body, and as mild and even tempered a mind, as before, in
‘ the

‘ the flower of his youth, he was infirm and
 ‘ apt to fly out into a passion. He compo-
 ‘ sed several treatises when he was very
 ‘ old ; wherein he tells us of the irregula-
 ‘ rity of his former life, and of his reforma-
 ‘ tion, and the hopes he had of living long.
 ‘ Nor was he mistaken in his account : for
 ‘ he died calmly, and without any pain,
 ‘ (being above an hundred years old) at
 ‘ Padua, where he had taken up his resi-
 ‘ dence. His wife, almost as old as him-
 ‘ self, survived him ; but within a short
 ‘ time after, died a very easy death. They
 ‘ were both buried in St Anthony’s church,
 ‘ without any pomp, according as they had
 ‘ ordered by their last will and testament.”

In the dialogue of Cardan, between a
 philosopher, a citizen, and an hermit, con-
 cerning the methods of “ prolonging a
 man’s life, and “ preserving his health ;”
 Cardan introduces the hermit discoursing
 thus :

“ Whereas in solid nourishments, and
 ‘ even in drinks, there are several things
 ‘ worthy our observation ; viz. their na-
 ‘ tural qualities, and those which they ac-
 ‘ quire by the seasoning of them ; the
 ‘ order and the time wherein we ought
 ‘ to make use of them, without mentioning
 ‘ the quantity of those very aliments and
 ‘ drinks ; it is not without reason, that thee
 ‘ question

‘ question is asked, which of these things is
‘ to be regarded most?

“ Some have declared themselves for
‘ the quantity; maintaining, that it has in
‘ effect a greater share than any other thing,
‘ in the preservation of health and life.

“ The famous LEWIS CORNARO, a
‘ noble Venetian, was of this mind. He
‘ treated on this subject at the age of
‘ fourscore, enjoying then a perfect sound-
‘ ness of body and mind. This venerable
‘ old man, at the age of thirty-six, was
‘ seized with so violent a distemper, that
‘ his life was despaired of. Ever after that
‘ time he took care to eat just the same
‘ quantity every meal: and tho’ he was
‘ not free from a great many fatigues, and
‘ some misfortunes, which occasioned his
‘ brother’s death; yet the exactness of his
‘ regimen preserved him always in health,
‘ with an entire freedom of mind.

“ At seventy years of age, a coach (in
‘ which he travelled) was overthrown, by
‘ which he was dragged a great way, and
‘ wounded in his head, and one of his legs
‘ and arms put out. The physicians de-
‘ spair’d of his recovery, and were for ap-
‘ plying a great many remedies to him:
‘ but CORNARO tell us, that being well
‘ satisfied of the temperature of his hu-
‘ mours, he rejected all the assistances of
‘ the physicians, and was quickly cured.

“ Nine

“ Nine years after, when he was almost
 ‘ fourscore, his friends, and his very phy-
 ‘ sicians, advised him to add two ounces
 ‘ to his ordinary diet. Within ten or
 ‘ twelve days after, he fell sick; the phy-
 ‘ sicians gave him over, and he himself be-
 ‘ gan to fear the worst; however, he re-
 ‘ covered his health, tho’ with much ado.”

The same author adds, “ that being
 ‘ fourscore years old, his sight and hearing
 ‘ was sound and good; that his voice held
 ‘ strong; that he sometimes sung in con-
 ‘ cert with his grand-children: that he
 ‘ could either ride, or walk a-foot very
 ‘ well; and that he composed a comedy,
 ‘ which came off with applause.

“ This wise old gentleman was then of
 ‘ the opinion, that a regular and small
 ‘ quantity of food contributed more than
 ‘ any thing else to the preservation of
 ‘ health; for he makes no mention of his
 ‘ choice of diets. I am used, says COR-
 ‘ NARO, to take, in all, twelve ounces of
 ‘ solid nourishment, such as meat, and and
 ‘ the yolk of an egg; and fourteen ounces
 ‘ of drink. It is to be lamented, that he
 ‘ did not precisely tell us, whether he took
 ‘ this quantity at once, or twice a day ::
 ‘ however since he tells us, that he did
 ‘ eat but a very little, it seems as if he did
 ‘ so but once a day.

“ Thee

“ The famous civilian, Panigarolus,
‘ who lived above seventy years, though
‘ of a very weak constitution, never eat or
‘ drank above twenty eight ounces a day;
‘ which comes almost to the same quantity
‘ of CORNARO.

“ I was intimately acquainted with one,
‘ who never took above thirty-six ounces a-
‘ day. It is true, indeed, that every fort-
‘ night he purged himself; bnt he lived
‘ to above ninety years of age.

“ It seems then, as if CORNARO was
‘ minded to keep from us a perfect know-
‘ ledge of his regimen, and only to tell us,
‘ that he had found out an extraordinary
‘ one; since he has not informed us, whe-
‘ ther he took the quantity he speaks of
‘ at once, or twice a day, nor whether he
‘ altered his diet; for he treats on that
‘ subject as darkly and obscurely as Hip-
‘ pocrates.

“ It is likewise strange, that the quanti-
‘ ty of his liquid should exceed that of his
‘ solid diet; and the rather, because what
‘ he did eat was not equally nourishing,
‘ since he took yolks of eggs, as well as meat.
‘ In truth, to me he seems to talk more
‘ like a philosopher, than a physician.”

Thus far Cardan: but, by his leave, if
he had read what CORNARO has written
concerning a sober and regular life, with
attention, he would have passed a sounder
judgment

judgment on his writings; for, in them, hee not only speaks of the quantity, but, in express terms, discourses of the quality of our diet.

Maxims to be observed for the prolonging of life.

IT is not good to eat too much, or to fast too long, or to do any thing else that is preternatural.

Whoever eats or drinks too much will be sick.

The distempers of repletion are cured by abstinence.

Old men can fast easily; men of ripe age can fast almost as much; but young persons and children, that are brisk and lively, can hardly fast at all.

Growing persons have a great deal of natural heat, which requires a great deal of nourishment, else the body will pine away: but old men, who have but a little natural heat, require but a little food; too much overcharges them.

It must be examined, what sort of persons ought to feed once or twice a day, more or less; allowance being always made to the age of the person, to the season of the year, to the place where one lives, and to custom.

The more you feed foul bodies, the more you hurt yourselves.

F I N I S.

