

MAXIME CCXLV.

To reason sometimes quite contrary to the mobile.

That shews a high mind. A great Genius ought not to esteem those who never contradict him. For that's no mark of their affection to him, but of their love to themselves. Let him have a care of being the fop to flattery by answering it any otherwise, than with the contempt which it deserves. Let him even take it for an honour to be censured by some people, and particularly by those, who speak ill of all good men. Let it vex him, if his actions please all sorts of men, seeing that's a sign that they are not such as they ought to be: what is perfect being observed but of a very few.

MAXIME CCXLVI.

Never to give satisfaction to those who demand none.

To give even too much to those who demand it, is a blameable action. To make an excuse before it be time, is to accuse

accuse ones self. To be let blood, when one is in health, is a signal for a sickness to come. An anticipated excuse awakens a discontent that slept. A Prudent Man ought not to seem sensible of another's suspicion, because that is to court his resentment. He ought onely endeavour to cure that suspicion by a sincere and civil deportment.

MAXIME CCXLVII.

To know a little more, and to live a little less.

Others on the contrary say, that honest leisure is better than much business: Nothing is ours, but time, which even they, who have no fixt habitation enjoy. It is an equal misfortune to employ the pretious time of life in mechanical exercises, or in the hurry of great affairs. One is not to load himself neither with business, nor envy. That's to live, and yet be choak't in a Croud. Some extend this precept even to Sciences. But not to know, is not to live. See *Maxime 4.*

MAXIME CCXLVIII.

Not to put off to the last.

There are men of a last impression, (for impertinence runs always upon extremes.) They have a mind and a will of wax. The last applies the Seal, and effaces all the others. These men are never gained, because with the same facility they are lost. Every body gives them a tincture. They are the worst confidants in the world. They are Children as long as they live: and as such, they onely float in the ebb and flood of their opinions and passions, always lame both in will and judgment, because they toss themselves now to one side, and by and by again to the other.

MAXIME CCXLIX.

Not to begin to live, where we should leave off.

Some take their ease in the beginning, and leave the pains to the latter end. What is substantial ought to go first, and the accessory after, if there be place for that. Others would triumph, before they

they fight. Some again begin their knowledge by what least concerns them, delaying the study of things that might prove usefull and honourable unto them, till life is like to fail. Hardly hath such a man begun to make his fortune, but he is gone, or going. The method is equally necessary both for knowing and living.

MAXIME CCL.

When must one reason the contrary way.

When men speak to us with a design to surprize us. With some people every thing ought to be taken in a contrary sense. The *yea* is the *no*, and the *no* the *yea*. To undervalue a thing is a sign one esteems it: seeing he that would have it for himself, depretiates it to others. To praise is not always to speak good: for some, that they may not praise the good, affect to commend the bad. He that thinks no body bad, will think no man good.

MAXIME CCLI.

We are to use Humane means, as if there were none Divine; and Divine means, as if there were none Humane.

It is the precept of a great Master, and needs no Commentary.

MAXIME CCLII.

Not altogether for thy self, nor altogether for others neither.

Both the one and the other is an insupportable Tyranny. To be altogether for ones self, infers necessarily, that one would have all to himself. These men cannot part with an ace of any thing that's convenient for them. They oblige little, they trust to their Fortune, but commonly that support fails them. It is good sometimes to forsake our selves for the sake of others, to the end others may do so for us. Whoever is in publick place, is by duty a publick Servant. Otherwise it will be said to him, what the old Woman said once to *Adrian* the Emperour: *Renounce then thy place, as thou dost thy duty.* On the contrary, others are altogether

together for others. For folly runs always to excess, and is very unlucky in that particular. They have not a day, nor so much as an hour for themselves, and they are so little their own men, that there was one who was called *Every bodies man*. They are not themselves even in the understanding. For they know for all, and are ignorant for themselves. Let a man of sense consider, that it is not he who is courted, but an interest that is in him, or depends upon him.

MAXIME CCLIII.

Not to be too intelligible.

Most part do not esteem what they conceive, but admire what they understand not. Things must cost somewhat, that they may be valued. One will pass for an able man, when he is not understood. He is to appear always more prudent, and intelligent than is needfull, with him to whom he speaks; but with proportion rather than excess. And though good sense be of great weight amongst knowing men, yet sublimity is necessary to please the most part. We must take from them the means of censuring, by busying their minds in conceiving. Ma-

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ny praise that which they can give no
reason for, when it is asked them: be-
cause they reverence as a mystery all that
is hard to be comprehended, and extoll it,
by reason they hear it extolled.

MAXIME CCLIV.

Not to slight the evil, because it is little.

For an evil never comes all alone. Evils,
as well as blessings hang together as by
links. Happiness and misery attend those
commonly who have most of either: and
thence it is, that all avoid the unhappy,
and court the fortunate. Doves them-
selves, for all their simplicity, rest on the
fairest Pidgeon House. Every thing goes
wrong with the unfortunate man, he is
wanting to himself, in losing the favoura-
ble gale. Misfortune, when asleep, is not
to be awakened. A slippery step is no
great matter, and yet it hath occasioned
a fatal fall, from which one could not tell
how to recover. For as no good is per-
fect, so is there no evil neither at its high-
est pitch. That which proceeds from
Heaven above, requires patience; and
that which arises from the world below,
Prudence.

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MAXIME CCLV.

To do small kindneses at a time, but often.

Engagement should never exceed Abili-
ty. Whoever gives much, does not give
but sell. Gratitude is not to be overloa-
ded. For he that finds himself in an im-
possibility to make satisfaction, will break
off the Correspondence. The way to
lose many Friends, is excessively to oblige
them. Being unable to re-pay, they with-
draw, and from being obliged, turn Enemies.
A statue would be willing never to see its
maker, nor the obliged his benefactor.
The best method in giving, is to order
things so, that it cost but little, and that
that little be earnestly desired, to the end
it may be the more esteemed.

MAXIME CCLVI.

*To be always in a readiness to ward the
blows of Clowns, Opiniatours, proud Per-
sons, and of all other Impertinents.*

There are a great many such to be met
with, and it is Prudence never to come
to a brush with them: Let a wise man
dayly look in the glass of reflexion, that
he

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he may see the need he hath of arming
himself with resolution, and by that
means he will disappoint all the jirks of
folly. If he think seriously on that, he'll
never expose himself to the ordinary
risques that men run into, by engaging
with Fools. A man armed with Pru-
dence, will never be baffled by imperti-
nence. The Navigation of civil life is
dangerous, because it is full of Rocks, on
which Reputation splits. The surest way
is to turn aside, taking lessons of cunning
from *Ulysses*. Here an artificial defeat
does great service. But above all, save
thy self by thy wit. For that's the shor-
test way of making the best of a bad bar-
gain.

MAXIME CCLVII.

Never to come to a Rupture.

For Reputation by so doing comes al-
ways off shattered. Any man is suffici-
ent to be an Enemy, but not a Friend.
Few are in a condition of doing good, but
all almost can doe mischief. The Eagle
is not secure in the armes of *Jupiter* him-
self, if it offend the Beetle. Secret En-
mies that lie upon the watch, blow the
fire, when they see the War declared.
Friends

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Friends that quarrel, become the worst
Enemies. They reckon their own choice
amongst other mens faults. Spectatours
of the rapture speak severally of it, as
they think, and think what they desire.
They condemn both parties either for
want of foresight in the beginning, or of
patience in the end, but always of Pru-
dence. If the rapture be inevitable, it
ought at least to be excusable. An indiffe-
rence would doe better than a violent de-
claration. On this occasion, a handsome
retreat is honourable.

MAXIME CCLVIII.

*To look out for one that may help to carry
the burthen of adversity.*

Be never alone, especially in dangers.
Else thou wilt charge thy self with all
the hatred. Some think to raise them-
selves by taking upon them the whole
oversight of business, and they attract
to themselves all the envy : whereas with
a companion one secures himself against
the evil, or at least bears but part of it.
Neither fortune nor the whimsy of the
people can play so easily upon two. The
skillfull Physician, who hath not succeeded
in the cure of his Patient, never fails to
take

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take the assistance of another, who under the name of consultation, helps him to bear up the Pall. Divide then the office and trouble of it: for it is intolerable to suffer alone.

MAXIME CCLIX.

To prevent offences, and turn them into favours.

There is more dexterity in shunning, than in revenging them. It is great address to make a confidant of him, who might have been an Adversary; and to transform those into butteresses of Reputation, who threaten to ruine the same. It is of great use to know how to oblige. To prevent an injury by a favour, is to intercept its course: and it is great skill in living, to change that which was like to cause nothing but discontent into pleasure. Place then thy confidence in malevolence it self.

MAXIME CCLX.

Thou shalt never be wholly at the devotion of any one, nor any one at thine.

Neither is bloud, friendship, nor the strictest obligation sufficient for that. For it

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it must be another-guests interest that can oblige one to abandon his heart and will. The greatest union admits of exception, and without prejudice too to the laws of most intimate Friendship. The Friend always reserves some secret, and the Son conceals somewhat even from the Father. Some things are made mysteries to some, and yet communicated to others; and contrariwise: so that a man resigns or refuses himself wholly, according to the distinction he makes of those of his Correspondence.

MAXIME CCLXI.

Not to continue a Foppery.

Some make an engagement of their mistakes: when they have once begun to fail, they think they are concerned in honour to continue. Their heart accuses their fault, and their mouth defends it. Whence it happens, that if they have been taxed for inadvertency, when they began the foppery, they pass for fools, when they continue it. An imprudent proneness, and a rash resolution, impose no obligation. Thus, some continue their first foolery, and make their
allines

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folliness the more remarkable, by a vanity
in appearing constant impertinents. See
the *Maxime* 214.

MAXIME CCLXII.

To know how to forget.

That's a happiness rather than an art.
Those things are best remembered which
ought most to be forgotten. The memory
hath not onely the incivility to fail one
in time of need, but also the impertinence,
to be unseasonably officious. In all that's
like to be troublesome, it is prodigal;
and barren in every thing that might
give pleasure. Sometimes the remedy of
the evil consists in forgetting it, and we
forget the remedy. Memory then must be
accustomed to take another course, because
it is it that can give us either a Paradise
or a Hell. I except those who live contentedly.
For in their state of Innocence they enjoy
the felicity of Idiots.

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MAXIME CCLXIII.

*Many things that serve for pleasure, ought
not to be peculiar.*

One enjoys more of what is another's,
than of what belongs to himself. The first
day is for the Master, and all the rest for
Strangers. One doubly enjoys what belongs
to others, that's to say, not onely without
fear of loss, but also with the pleasure of
Novelty. Privation makes every thing better.
The water of another man's Well is as
delicious as Nectar. Besides that possession
lessens the pleasure of enjoyment, it
augments the trouble, whether in lending,
or in not lending. It serves onely to
preserve things for another: and over and
above, the number of the discontented is
always greater, than of the thankfull.

MAXIME CCLXIV.

To be at no time careles.

Lot takes pleasure in surprize. It will
let slip a thousand occasions to take its
men one day napping. Wit, Prudence
and Courage ought to be upon the guard,
and

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and in like manner beauty, inasmuch as
the day of its confidence, will be that of
the loss of its credit. *The Who thought*
on't is the trip that turns up the heels.
Besides, it is an ordinary trick of others
malice to lay a snare for good qualities,
that they may be more rigorously sifted.
The days of ostentation are well known,
and cunning pretends not to mind it: but
it chuses the day when one least expects,
to make a tryal of what one is able to
doe:

MAXIME CCLXV.

To know how to engage ones Dependents.

A pat engagement hath put a great many men in credit, just as a ship-wreck makes good swimmers. By that, many have displayed their industry and ability, which would have lain buried in their retirement, if occasion had not presented. Difficulties and dangers are the causes and spurs of Reputation. A great courage, in the occasions of honour, does as much service as a thousand others. *Queen Isabelle of Castile*, knew eminently that lesson of engaging, as well as all others: and the great *Captain Gonsalvo* owed all his Reputation to that politick
Address.

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Address, which was the cause also, that many others became great men.

MAXIME CCLXVI.

To be too good, is to be naught.

He is so, who is never angry. Insensible men are scarcely men. That quality proceeds not always from indolency, but often from incapacity. To resent when it is proper, is the action of a complete man. Birds at first sight scorn your carved figures. To mingle the sharp with the sweet, is the sign of a good relish. Sweetness alone is onely for Children and Idiots. It's a great misfortune to fall into that insensibility, by being too good natured.

That man, says he, in the seventh Critick of the third part of his Criticon, is one of those who are called insensible; of those people, whom nothing can alter, and who are not concerned at any thing; not so much as at the greatest reverse of fortune, nor the imperfection of their own nature, nor yet the home-thrusts of malice. The whole world may conspire against them, it's all one to them; it will neither spoil their Appetite, nor break their sleep. And that they call indolence, nay, great courage too. R MAX-