SURE AND CERTAIN METHODS

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.*

It is an unhappiness into which the men of this age are fallen, that variety of dishes is *A-la-mode*. Prodigality is at present styled magnificence, generosity, and grandeur, and is esteemed in the world; whilst frugality passes for avarice and sordidness of spirit. Here is a visible error, which custom and habit have established.†

* MAN is the child of custom in every thing; or, as Shakspeare expresses it,—"How use doth breed habit in a man:" by custom, he is reconciled to different kinds of air; and no animal can be made to live in so many various climates.

In respect to food and raiment he is equally the slave of habit, whatever that is; and hence the truth of the observation, "Choose that mode of life which is most proper, for habit will always reconcile you to it." Habit, however, seldom comes to be established until middle age; and, as we advance in life, it rules with despotic authority.

† Luxury may be said to destroy more than the sword; and more die from indulgence in it than disease: the mortality of one half, in great towns, is from this cause. The *ne quid nimis* s the golden rule in whatever regards health; it is the precep

This error has so far seduced us, that it has prevailed upon us to renounce a frugal way of living, though taught us by nature, even from the first age of the world; and has cast us into those excesses which serve only to abridge the number of our days. We become old before we taste the pleasure of being young; and the time which ought to be the summer of our lives, is often the beginning of our winter. We soon perceive our strength to fail 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. 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.*

It is very easy 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 overcharge 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.†

of nature, and cannot long be transgressed with impunity. A remarkable instance of the fatal effects of indulgence is given in Dr. Buchan's work, in the case of a favourite child, who, from over indulgence, died of old age and a worn-out constitution at the age of fifteen.

* A temperate diet is always attended with healthful effects on the body, and on the disposition of the mind; the smallest liquors are the best. The best dinner is one dish; and health is put in jeopardy by every additional dish served up on the table.

† Health can only be preserved by self-denial; but that denial must be regulated by circumstances connected with the situation of the individual.

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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 them, as now I have sorrow in losing them?

It is to put a stop to this spreading contagion that I have undertaken this small tract. Several young persons, having lost their fathers sooner than they could have expected, have expressed a great desire of being acquainted with my manner of living. Hereupon I was willing to satisfy them, 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 by demonstrating, that nothing can be more beneficial to a man, than to observe a regimen that is practicable.*

* Cornaro, though a strong instance of the happy effects of a regulated regimen, in the recovery of health, is not the one who deserves the most implicit imitation. The Cardinal De Senlis, under a less restricted plan, lived a hundred years,—an equal age to Cornaro; and his maxim had been, in the progress of his life, to live with the caution of an old man when young, so that when old in years, he was still, in constitution, a youth.

The celebrated John Wesley is another instance, who, with a natural weak and infirm habit, was able to undergo much bodily and mental exertion, for a long life, and to possess the *mens sana in corpore sano*, solely by adhering to certain rules he had laid down.

In more modern times, Sir John Sinclair recovered his health by a similar plan, though without any of those rigid regulations which marks the plan of Cornaro. Sir John observes,—though naturally possessed of a sound constitution, untainted by any hereditary disease, yet, about the year 1797, he fell into a weak and enervated state, found himself unequal to manage his private concerns, of prosecuting useful enquiries, or of applying his mind to political pursuits, with his former zeal and energy; he saw, also, many of his contemporaries die at an early period, before their constitutions had, apparently, suffered much decay. By

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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 feastings, to which I had all my life a violent inclination. I was so often engaged in excesses of this kind, that my tender constitution could not hold up under them. I fell into several distempers, such as pains of the stomach, the cholic, 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 forty 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 that 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 it

reflecting on these circumstances, and a number of others, with which the subject is connected, he came to the conclusion, that more die from their own faults than from actual disease; and that life might, accordingly, be prolonged, and health enjoyed with satisfaction, by a proper and regulated conduct with each individual, in regard to the various circumstances connected with the continuance or support of life; accordingly, by laying down a proper plan of proceeding for himself, he not only recovered his own health, but was enabled, by his advice to others, to render them an equal benefit. These circumstances led him to publish his celebrated work, entitled, "A Code of Longevity," where he brings forward, as a leading professional example of his precepts, the celebrated physician, Galen, who, by a certain plan strictly adhered to, reached the age of one hundred and forty.

* Though a regular diet will lessen the fit of the gout, it will by no means cure it, unless very early begun. The fit is connected with a something like a critical matter, discharged from the constitution, by the secretion of the joints or extreme parts of the body, which will accumulate, though in a less degree under a regulated regimen.

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intemperance had brought so many distempers, 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 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.*

The physicians beginning to find me tractable, added to what they had before told me, that I must either choose 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 could not tell how to bear the thoughts of it; so 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. I did so: in a little time I found relief; and (which may seem to some incredible) at the year's end, I found myself perfectly cured of all my distempers.†

* It is to be regretted that health is seldom attended to till too late; but the foundation for longevity should be laid in youth, and when early began, on a regular system, it is in the power of every one to add twenty or thirty years to his life with satisfaction and comfort.

† The first fruits of Cornaro's regimen were evinced in the space of one year, when, from a low estate of bodily infirmity, he entirely recovered his health: a flattering example for others to follow. But though Cornaro's system is proper, and should be known, in order to establish what nature actually requires, and no more; yet, without such privation, one general line of conduct is only necessary—the rule of temperance and moderation.

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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 which 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.

I loved heady wines, salt meats, high sauces, and baked meats, yet they were prejudicial to me. Hereupon I made no account of the proverb; but being convinced of its falsity, made choice of such wines and meats as agreed with my constitution: I proportioned the quantity thereof 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. In a word, I entirely renounced intemperance. This has freed me from all my infirmities. 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.

Even this temperance should be regulated by the age and pursuits of the individual; for what is temperance, accompanied with an active and laborious life, would constitute intemperance with the sedentary and indolent: no precise rules, therefore, can exactly apply, but every one will learn, in a certain time, both what quantity his constitution can bear, and what articles best agree with him.

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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. I no longer lived in places where 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, in their transactions in the world, follow no other guide 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 the pleasures of sense, and hurry of business.

I likewise found it advantageous to restrain the force of those passions,* whose violence does often break the constitution of the strongest bodies. It is true, indeed, that sometimes I fell into those disorders that I would have avoided; but this rarely happened: and the guard I kept over my appetite, 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 an inordinate appetite. 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 avoid the extremes of heat and cold, and to get an entire mastery over all the occasions of trouble; but

* The great art of man is to manage well the restless mind, for there lies, in general, the bane of health: the talents adapted to long life are those of the solid, not the brilliant cast; and few brilliant men, or those who possess the real spark of genius, except Fontenelle, have reached to the age of one hundred.

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yet these emotions made no alteration in the state of my health: and I met with many persons who sunk under a less weight, both of body and mind.*

At seventy years of age I had an experiment of the usefulness of my regimen. A business of an extraordinary consequence drawing me into the country, my coach-horses being lashed with the whip, got a-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, and a leg and an arm out of joint. As soon as they had brought me home, they sent for the physicians, who did not expect I could live three days: however, they resolved upon letting me blood, to prevent the fever, which usually happens in such cases. I was so confident the regular life which I had led had prevented the contracting any ill-humours, that I opposed their prescription. I ordered them to dress my head, to set my leg and arm, to rub me with some 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.

About five years ago, I was over-persuaded to do a thing which had like to have cost me dear. My relations, who have a real tenderness for me; my friends, with whom I was willing to comply in any thing reasonable; and lastly, my physicians, did all agree, that I eat too little; that the nourishment I took, was not sufficient for one of my years; that I ought not only to support nature, but likewise to increase the 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;

* Equanimity of temper is the golden rule for longevity.

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that it was more reasonable, since natural heat abates in proportion as one grows older, that I should likewise abridge my diet.

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 to 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. At twelve days end, I was taken with a violent fit of the cholick, 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 friends 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, though I was seventy-eight years of age, and though 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,

* Temporary repletion, in moderate people, requires only a fast for a day or two, to restore the system to its regular state. This was the practice of the celebrated John Hume, the author of the Tragedy of "Douglas." When he was in London, and overpowered by the hospitality of his friends, he made it a rule to fast always on Sunday, and take nothing but an egg.

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which were occasioned by this small addition to my diet, I 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.

If all men would live regularly and frugally, there would be so few sick persons, that there would hardly be any occasion for remedies; every one 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.*

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 human prudence cannot provide against. There happen some unavoidable accidents, which seize us after such a manner, as to deprive us of our judgment. A physician then may be needful for the recovery of our health: but for the maintaining of that health, there needs no other support but a sober and regular life.

It may be objected, that if one who is well, is dieted like one that is sick, he will be at a loss about the choice

* The Emperor Tiberius thought it shameful in any man, after the age of sixty, not to know his own pulse without having recourse to a physician.

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of his diet when any distemper comes upon him. To this I say, that nature 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 that time, whether the sick person has been sober or intemperate, no other food ought to be made use of, but such as is proper for the condition wherein he is; such as broth, 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.

I do not persuade every body to eat as little as I do, or to debar themselves from the use of 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; only they ought to abstain from eating too much, even of that which agrees with them. 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.*

* The treatise of Cornaro is written with the garrulity and egotism of an old man, full of the perfection of his own system. The principle of that system is just and correct; but the length to which he has carried it only shews what a trifle will suffice to support nature, though such a life of rigid privation can only expect to be imitated under disease.

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It signifies nothing to tell me, several who deny themselves nothing, yet live as long without infirmities as they who are sober. This is but rare, very uncertain, and in a manner miraculous. And in the mean time it is certain, 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, this is true, that a good constitution, with 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, but among a thousand one shall hardly meet with the like. All others, who are for a long and healthful life, who would enjoy the advantages of a happy old age, will never come to it without sobriety.

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, 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 fancy, that when a man is past seventy, his life is nothing but weakness and misery.

In the first 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 delightsome stage of life.

I am still so strong at fourscore and three, as to mount a horse without any help: I can not only go down stairs without any concern, but likewise descend a hill on foot: I am always pleased, always in good humour; maintaining a happy peace in my own mind, the sweetness and serenity whereof appear at all times in my countenance.

I taste 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

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to writing; seeking always an occasion of being useful to the public, and doing service to private persons. I do all this without the least trouble; and in such times as I set apart for these employments.

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

Through this Villa runs a rivulet, and the country about 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.

That which charmed me most, in the little journies I took, was the various prospects of places through which I went: the plains, the hills, the rivulets, the castles, and the villages, where so many objects that afforded a delightful view.

And 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 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

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uncultivated and useless; a thing I never expected to have seen completed, considering how many states are loth to begin, and weary to carry 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 oversight of these works, and this, during the greatest heat of summer: and yet, 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 crazy old men, as well as miserable young men, labour.

As an addition to my happiness, I see myself as it were 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 delight in playing with the youngsters; children between three and five years of age being generally very 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.

A sober life therefore being so necessary, and the enjoyment of it so beneficial, nothing remains but to conjure all men, as they love themselves, to make the best of life, and 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 pleasing to God, and the friend of nature; she is the daughter of reason, the sister of all other virtues; always cheerful, always modest, always wise and regular in her operations. She is the root of health, of industry, and of whatever

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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 embitter our pleasures.

CHAP. II.

The method of correcting a bad Constitution.

SEVERAL persons whose weak constitutions required great care in the management of them, 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, before they decay all of a sudden, and perceive themselves loaded with a complication of distempers. Some are gouty, dropsical, and rheumatical; others are subject to cholics, the stone, and piles; yea, 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

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in health to an hundred, and to have run out the term of life which nature has left open to all men.

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, 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 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 occasioned a loss 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 days of my youth; but likewise my judgment has lost nothing of its clearness and force.

I am of the opinion this proceeds from the abridgment I make of my food, proportionably to my growing into years. Experience, which tells us, that children 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

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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.

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, there are several who eat and drink plentifully, and yet live to an hundred years. It is by their example that others flatter themselves with the hopes of attaining 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 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 risk 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 several others have practised, and do practice.

A good regimen is necessary for the prolonging of our days; and 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 three score 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, though he be fatigued, though his sleep 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

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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 obliged to transgress the rules which they have been used to observe: but then, their indisposition seldom lasts above two or three days at most. And their weariness and faintness are easily remedied by rest and good diet.

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 a 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 man in years, has so composed him, that he may live with a 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 to a regular sort of diet, which is the first thing prescribed him by his physicians.*

Others had rather be disturbed twice or thrice a year with the gout, the sciatica, or other epidemical distempers, than to be always put to the mortification of laying a restraint upon their appetites; being sure, that when they are indisposed, a regular diet will be an infallible cure.

But let them be informed by me, that as they grow up in years their natural heat abates; and that a regular diet, despised as a precaution, and only looked

* This maxim of Cornaro is not altogether correct. Though the quantity of food, with old persons, should be sparing; yet, as age advances, it is necessary, in some degree, to increase the stimulus; and if wine has not been used at a former period, it is requisite to take it in moderation now.

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upon as physic,* cannot always have the same force to repair the disorders which are caused by repletion.

O sacred and beneficent temperance! How much am I obliged to thee, for seeing the time which has so many charms, when one follows the maxims, and observes those rules which thou dost prescribe! When I deny my senses nothing, I did not taste such pure and refined pleasure as I now enjoy. They were then so troublesome, and mixed with pains, that even in the height of those enjoyments, the bitterness exceeded the sweetness.

O happy state of life! which, beside other blessings with which thou favourest an old man, dost preserve his stomach in so perfect a tone, as to make him relish a piece of dry bread,† better than the voluptuous do all their dainty morsels. 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. So 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 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 cheerful; and more so after than before meals. I use myself, presently upon rising

* Accustom yourself to little meat from youth, and little will suffice.

† A dissertation has been written on the good effects of a crust of bread taken in the morning, fasting. It can only act by eliciting a greater quantity of saliva, which passes into the stomach and thus increases the appetite.

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from the table, to write or study;* and never find, that this application of mind, after eating, is prejudicial to me: for I am equally capable at all times of 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 fish, I choose the pike.† All these

* If the stomach is not distended to repletion, a person would be more lively after than before a meal.

† Some remarks it is necessary to make here on Cornaro's articles of diet, specified as above:—

The first article, termed the staff of life, is bread, and, in proportion to its fineness, it is more indigestible and best calculated for strong stomachs: coarse or brown bread, made of the old wheaten flour unsifted, is preferable for delicate and weak stomachs; rolls and other bread, at breakfast, have all the bad effects of new bread, in producing fermentation and flatulency. A mixture of grains is generally the most wholesome in bread, as one kind of grain counteracts the bad effects of the other: forming grain into bread is absolutely necessary, in order to lessen its viscidity and render it digestible. Stale bread is the most wholesome; where bread is used fresh it is best toasted. Bread is a most essential article of diet, and should be at least in the proportion of one-third of what we eat. In France and Italy the proportionate quantity of diet is much greater. The best of unleavened bread is biscuit; fermentation is essential to the making of bread, as it renders it both light and tends to correct the putrescency of animal *diet*.

The next article in Cornaro's bill of fare is soup. This form of animal food is to be considered as intended to prevent its excess, and also to fill up the stomach; and as all *solid* must be converted into a liquid state before it passes into nourishment, so the action of the stomach requires to be less exerted where a proper supply of nourishment is taken in a liquid state; and the necessity of this form of nourishment will be evident, when it is considered that the fluids of the body are rated at 160, while the solids are only 60 pounds weight. Soups are much used in diet on the continent, but much more sparingly in this country. The proportion in which they are taken, must be regulated by

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aliments are proper for old men; who, if they be wise for themselves, would be contented with these, and seek no other.

the exertion to which the individual is subjected: but in this form some of the hardiest people have been brought up, particularly in Scotland; and the great attention paid by Count Rumford to this form of diet, for the lower classes, is a proof of his opinion of their nourishing quality.

The third article is new-laid eggs, which contain a large proportion of pure nourishment, and should be subjected, when used, to as little cookery as possible; they are best when soft-boiled, and equally useful when mixed with other articles.

Veal, the next article, though tender and nourishing, is not so easily digested, from its glutinous quality, to weak and indolent stomachs; it requires to be assisted by the addition of vegetable acids, as lemon and vinegar.

The fifth article enumerated by Cornaro is kid. The flesh is a great delicacy, and, in many countries, preferred to lamb; but the domestic goat is more indigestible, and resembles venison in many respects. In Italy, Portugal, and the southern climates, it forms a substitute for lamb.

The sixth article in the list is mutton, which is both highly nutritious, and more used and relished than any other animal food. The sweetest and most digestive kind is the wether, when fed on dry flowery pasture, and five years old. The best form is roasted, and the lean part most easily assimilated.

The seventh article recommended is partridge, which is certainly a delicate food, though not so highly flavoured as some other game; and, as exercise produces firmness of flesh, the legs of the partridge are tough, and its wings, on the contrary, tender.

The eighth article is pullets, or young fowls, a most delicate and wholesome food; they are nearly equal to vegetable aliment, and making them capons still more improves them.

The ninth article, pigeons, are a food of a high and heating nature, but, if used, are best when young.

The last article that is used, of animal food, is fish. The proportion of nourishment from fish has been doubted; and where a reduction of weight is wanting for horse-racing, this diet is preferred. It is a great recommendation, as it is of easy digestion, being therefore fitted for the inactive and sedentary; but it is a nourishment not so genial as animal food to the human frame.

The fish preferred by Cornaro is the pike, which is a fish of prey; if not too large or too old it is firm, palatable, and whole-

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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. But a man 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.

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 had the power of resisting its charms.

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, but become incurable, because they will not observe a regimen. I do not wonder so much that

some; but the greatest care ought to be taken to avoid swallowing the bones, which are sharp and pointed, and of a texture so peculiarly hard that they will not dissolve in the stomach, and are apt to occasion affections of the alimentary canal.

The rules with respect to eating of fish are, that they should be dressed as fresh as possible; they should be eaten quite hot, and, unless pickled, never in a cold state; neither should it be eaten too often, nor after solid food; its digestion should be promoted by acids and condiment. In proportion to its oil, fish is more indigestible; it is best used with vegetable food.

Cornaro has enumerated all these articles for rich old age, that can afford them; but the poor old man he confines to three articles, bread, broth, and eggs; out of which, certainly, ample nourishment may be had.

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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 last us to our graves.

CHAP. III.

A Letter to Signior BARBARO, *Patriarch of* AQUILEA; *concerning the Method of enjoying 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 masterpiece 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? It is after this manner that I shall enter into discourse with you, and relate to you several profitable things.

It is true, that what I have to tell you is no news, with respect to the matter thereof; but I never told it you at the age of ninety-one years. It is somewhat

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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 surprised 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.

Be pleased then, sir, to know, that for some days past, several doctors of our university, as well physicians as 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, and spent the rest of the day in walking out, and in taking all the innocent pleasures that are allowed to a virtuous man; even music itself, in which I bear my part.

How sweet a voice would you perceive mine to be, where you to hear me chant forth the praises of God to the sound of my lyre? 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.

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 incapable of doing nothing after fourscore, being loaded with infirmities and distempers.

That if there be any of them who are less infirm, yet their senses are decayed; their sight and hearing

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fail 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 to be one that is free from those disasters, his memory decreases, his spirits sink, and his heart fails him; in short, he does not enjoy life so perfectly as I do. What they wondered at most, was a thing that is really surprising. 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 if I forced myself to drink any; for neither my stomach nor my palate can bear it. And yet wine being as it were mother's milk to old men, it seems as if I could not possibly preserve my life without it. My stomach then being deprived of an help so proper for 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 of September, was not made at that time, I could never escape death. They were no less surprised to see, that in three or four days' time, new wine will restore to me that strength which I had lost by drinking the old; a thing of which they were witnesses these 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 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 miracle, and the many favours which I received from God, obliged them to tell me, that I brought

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along with me at my birth, an extraordinary and special gift of nature.

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 one: that there was no man alive but what might have received it as well as myself: that man, when he is young, being more subject to his sense than to his reason, gives himself up wholly to his pleasures; 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. But 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 forerunners: 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 chiefly depend. That lastly, if the former part of our lives were altogether sensual, then the latter ought to be rational and regular; order being necessary for the preservation of all things, especially the life of man. In truth, my lord, it is impossible for them who will always gratify their taste, not to break their constitution; and that I might not break mine, when I was arrived at maturity, I entirely devoted myself to a sober life. It is true, it was not without some reluctancy that I 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. I used myself to a course of life

* The diet of Cornaro was only suited to a sort of passive existence, and hence not suited for the exertions of individuals in society.

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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.*

CHAP. 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, 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, but, at the same time, nothing is more certain; it being what a great many know, and what is worthily to be admired by all posterity. I am now ninety-five years of age, and find myself as healthful and brisk, and as airy, as if I were but twenty-five.

What ingratitude should I be guilty of, did I not return thanks to the divine goodness, for all his mercies reached out unto me! Most of your old men have scarce arrived at sixty, but they find themselves loaded with infirmities: they are melancholy, unhealthful, full of the frightful apprehensions of dying; they tremble day and night, being within one foot of their graves.

Some bodies are born with so bad a constitution that they live but a few days, or months.

* The golden rule of health consists in an attention to temper, temperance, and sleep.

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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, bringing upon themselves many distempers, because they trust 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. They never 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 eat and drink. They are of opinion, that a man's strength impairing as he grows into years, he ought to repair 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 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 little for the support of the life of man, especially that of an old man.*

* The proportion of diet, twelve ounces of solid food, and sixteen ounces of liquid, in twenty-four hours, shows on how little nature can be supported, and in health. Many others

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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, since they brought into the world a strong constitution. Perhaps they might have arrived to six score, as a great many others 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 make than myself may, by living soberly, as I do, easily attain to the same period.†

have imitated Cornaro on this subject, a few of which may be enumerated.

Lord Heathfield lived for some time on four ounces of rice a day.

Dr. Franklin lived for some time on bread and water, at the rate of ten pounds of bread per week, and continued stout and hearty.

Alderman Brook Watson lived on fourteen ounces of food a day, as a regular restricted diet, and never had an illness, dying at the age of sixty-nine.

Doctor Stark lived on twenty-four ounces of bread and four pounds of water a day.

Abstinence is enforced in some countries equally by law and religion, and an occasional fast is of great use as an antidote to occasional feasting; but too great abstinence is often more pernicious than occasional repletion.

* Dr. Cheyne's rules of diet are thus proportioned: eight ounces of meat, twelve ounces of bread or vegetables, and a pint of wine or other generous liquor. For sedentary persons he recommends four ounces of bread and eight of tea, four ounces of meat, eight of water, and twelve of wine. Then, for active persons, seventeen ounces of meat daily; and, when still more active, increased to twenty-six.

† The system of Cornaro is only for an invalid, (as we have already remarked,) born with a weakly constitution, and strong tendency to disease. It is true, he attained by it a hundred years, but we have other remarkable instances of those who have exceeded his age without such rigorous restriction.

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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

Isabel Walker, a Scotch woman, died at 112, without such severity of regimen; but she was distinguished by a placidity of temper, and possessed that happy medium state of habit, neither lean nor corpulent, favourable to long life.

Peter Garden, a Scotsman, died aged 131; his stature was tall, and his employment agriculture, which he continued to his death, with a remarkable appearance of freshness and youth.

John Taylor, a Scotch miner, lived to 132; he always used tobacco, and his teeth continued sound to the last.

Gylloul Macrain, a native of the island of Toura, in the Hebrides, died, after keeping 180 Christmas masses.

Lawrence, a native of the Shetland Islands, married at the age of 100, and died at 140.

Kentigern, or St. Mungo, Bishop of Glasgow, lived to the age of 185, as certified on his monument.

Catharine, Countess of Desmond, who died in the reign of James the First, was 140; and thrice, in the course of her life, she renewed her teeth.

Thomas Parr, a native of Shropshire, was buried in the Abbey of Westminster, at the age of 152.

Henry Jenkins, of Northallerton, Yorkshire, lived to the age of 169, being first a labourer, and afterwards a fisherman.

Sarah Rouen, 164; and John Rouen, her husband, 172, were married 147 years, both natives of the Directory of Carsouseber.

Petratsch Zorten, a native of Hungary, and a cow-herd, lived to 185.

The greater proportion of these persons were natives of *Scotland*, though it is remarked that the most numerous instances of longevity are to be met with in Norway and Russia; out of 6929 persons, in Norway, 63 had lived to a hundred; and out of 726,278, in Russia, 216 attained one hundred years, 220 above it, and 4 one-hundred-and-thirty. In the list of longevity, enumerated above, all these persons were of a low situation of life, except the Countess of Desmond: and the diet of all of them seems to have been moderate, and in some instances, abstemious. Parr's maxims of health were, to keep your head cool by temperance, your feet warm by exercise; to rise early, and go soon to bed; and, if you are inclined to get fat, to keep your eyes open and your mouth shut, or, be moderate in your sleep and diet.

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effaces all things, should likewise destroy the most curious workmanship of nature. That which had a beginning, must needs have an end; but man may end his days by a natural death, that is, without any pain the radical moisture shall be quite exhausted.

I find this principle of life still perfect in me. 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, (though 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.†

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

The diet of Jenkins is said to have been course and sour; and in the north of England, distinguished for long-lived people, it is much the same, consisting of salted meat and sour-leavened hot bread.

Zorten's diet consisted entirely of milk and cakes, with a glass of brandy; and, being of the Greek church, he was, to the last, a strict observer of all their fasts.

* Sleep is necessary to age, and intended to recruit the wasted spirits; hence it should be more indulged in as we advance in life, for age is a second childhood. Ten hours is the proper medium, if sleep is sound; where interrupted, the warm bath and an addition, more or less, of wine will bring it on: regular hours are the great point for age.

† Passive exercises are best suited to the aged; and walking, of all others, is preferable: it should never be intermitted, even in bad weather. Exercise of the lungs is particularly proper in old people, and their food should consist in light and moist articles of diet; errors in diet are particularly dangerous in age; and malt liquor is more preferable than wine to old persons. Warmth is to be particularly studied in age; and hence their health is better in the summer than winter, and fewer deaths occur in the summer-months. Sudden changes of situation are always dangerous for old persons.

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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.

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 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 a plenty of all things necessary for life, by manuring untilled lands, draining the marshes, by laying under water and fatening 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 than ever, as also the air more wholesome.

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 grand-children 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,

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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 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 moral assurance of the infinite good things which the divine bounty prepares for us.*

* In comparing the different classes of society, with respect to longevity, we find that the profession of a gardener is the most healthy; next to it, husbandmen are also healthy, but from their great exertions and exposure to every weather, they are soon worn out, and generally old men before fifty. Manufacturers are neither healthy nor long-lived; miners, who are much below ground, are generally healthy, and often long-lived. Soldiers, unless cut off by the casualties of war, are long-lived, as well as sailors, who are generally healthy; and this is proved by the records both of Chelsea and Greenwich Hospitals. Persons engaged in commerce, if not too speculative, and their minds ract with anxiety, are generally long-lived. The voluptuous, both in town and country, are commonly cut off in their prime. Dancing-masters are long-lived, from their constant exercises; singers, on the contrary, are short-lived. The learned professions, at the farthest, seldom exceed the age of eighty. In addition to these remarks, it may be observed, that married men, compared with bachelors, are long-lived; for the life of a bachelor is generally short and uncomfortable. In respect to the sexes, women are generally longer-lived than men; and mothers longer-lived than single women.

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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 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 not an 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.

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 children!

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CHAP. V.

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 free to remain in Venice, if he pleased; but seeing himself excluded from 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.

This was an only daughter, who was married to John Cornaro of the family, which was distinguished by the sir-name 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.

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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 was naturally liberal, nevertheless without profuseness. His youth was infirm; and he was very passionate; but when he perceived what damages the vices of his temper caused him, he resolved to correct them, and 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 observed the rules which he mentions in his writings, and dieted himself always with so much precaution, that finding his natural heat decaying in 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 a little before his death, it served him for two meals.

By this means he preserved his health, and was vigorous to the age of an hundred years; his mind did not decay, he never had need of spectacles, neither lost his hearing. Nay, he preserved his voice so clear and harmonious, that at the end of his life he sang with as much strength and delight as he did at the age of twenty-five.

When he felt that his last hour drew near, he disposed himself to leave this life with the piety of a Christian. 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. He seemed in good health, feeling no manner of pain; having also his mind and eye very brisk, when

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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 eighth of May 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 as not to be perceived.

They were both buried in St. Anthony's church, without any pomp, according as they had ordered by their last will and testament.

* The death of extreme old age is generally sudden and without any struggle. Nature exhausted, is incapable of those efforts to resist annihilation and retain life, which occur at an earlier age; and the suspension of the principal function for a few seconds produces an irrecoverable collapse, or syncope, so that a fainting or a sigh only marks their exit.

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