

SIR FRANCIS BACON (1561-1626), LAWYER, MP, PUBLIC SERVANT, EARLY SCIENTIST, AND WRITER. Born the son of Sir Nicholas Bacon, important advisor to Elizabeth I, Francis Bacon followed in his father's footsteps, taking on many important offices in his career, including solicitor-general, lord keeper of the Great Seal, and lord chancellor. His works include not simply his famous *Essays* (1597; revised and enlarged editions, 1612 and 1625), but the influential *Advancement of Learning* (1605) and *New Atlantis* (1626). A dedicated and learned humanist, as well as a proponent of the new sciences, Bacon died after having contracted some kind of virus during experiments concerning refrigeration and the preservation of food.

Editions:

*The Oxford Authors: Francis Bacon*. Ed. Brian Vickers. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1996.

*The Works of Francis Bacon*. Ed. James Spedding. 7 vols. (London, 1857-59)

ESSAYS (1625)<sup>1</sup>

OF FRIENDSHIP

It had been hard for him that spoke it to have put more truth and untruth together in few words than in that speech, 'Whosoever is delighted in solitude is either a wild beast or a god.'<sup>2</sup> For it is most true that a natural<sup>3</sup> and secret hatred and aversion<sup>4</sup> towards society in any man hath somewhat of the savage beast, but it is most untrue that it should have any character<sup>5</sup> at all of the divine nature, except it proceed not out of a pleasure in solitude but out of a love and desire to sequester a man's self for a higher conversation:<sup>6</sup> such as is found to have been falsely and feignedly<sup>7</sup> in some of the heathen—as Epimenides the Candian, Numa the Roman, Empedocles the Sicilian, and Apollonius of Tyana<sup>8</sup>—and truly and really in divers<sup>9</sup> of the ancient

<sup>1</sup> Bacon published his first version of *Essays* in 1597 (reprinted 1598, 1606, and 1616), and it contained 10 essays; in 1612 he published a second edition, enlarging the work to 38 essays; and finally in the third edition of 1625, it contained 58 essays.

<sup>2</sup> Aristotle, *Politics* (1.2.1253a3). However, Aristotle makes this point in the context of his argument that the state is a creation of nature and that she has implanted in men a social instinct, making him an innately political animal.

<sup>3</sup> *natural* indwelling, innate.

<sup>4</sup> *aversion* i.e., aversion.

<sup>5</sup> *character* characteristic.

<sup>6</sup> *conversation* social intercourse.

<sup>7</sup> *feignedly* a synonym for 'falsely.'

<sup>8</sup> Each of these ancient figures had a reputation either for ascetic practices and / or magical powers: *Epimenides the Candian* (fl. 6<sup>th</sup> c. BCE), ascetic and magician; after falling asleep for better part of 6 decades he woke with prophetic abilities; *Numa Pompilius*, legendary Roman king, had a reputation for promoting peace and piety, and was famed for his mystic communication with the divine; Plutarch, however, reports that Numa only pretended to have intimate communication with the gods as a method of encouraging the Romans to go along with his founding of Rome's religious rites and institutions (Plutarch, 'Life of Numa Pompilius,' 1.183-5); *Empedocles the Sicilian* (fl. 492-432 BCE), philosopher, orator, poet; many ancient legends presented Empedocles as possessing mystic, semi-divine powers; *Apollonius of Tyana* (b. c. 4 BCE), philosopher. Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius* details this wandering

hermits and holy fathers of the Church. But little do men perceive what solitude is, and how far it extendeth. For a crowd is not company; and faces are but a gallery of pictures; and talk but a tinkling cymbal, where there is no love.<sup>10</sup> The Latin adage meeteth with it a little:<sup>11</sup> ‘Magna civitas, magna solitudo,’<sup>12</sup> because in a great town friends are scattered, so that there is not that fellowship, for the most part, which is in less<sup>13</sup> neighbourhoods. But we may go further, and affirm most truly that it is a mere<sup>14</sup> and miserable solitude to want<sup>15</sup> true friends, without which the world is but a wilderness. And even in this sense also of solitude, whosoever in the frame<sup>16</sup> of his nature and affections is unfit for friendship, he taketh it of the beast, and not from humanity.

A principal fruit of friendship is the ease and discharge<sup>17</sup> of the fullness and swellings of the heart,<sup>18</sup> which passions of all kinds do cause and induce. We know diseases of stoppings and suffocations<sup>19</sup> are the most dangerous in the body, and it is not much otherwise in the mind: you may take *sarza* to open the liver, *steel* to open the spleen, flower of *sulphur* for the lungs, *castoreum* for the brain,<sup>20</sup> but no receipt<sup>21</sup> openeth the heart but a true friend, to whom you may impart griefs, joys, fears, hopes, suspicions, counsels, and whatsoever lieth upon the heart to oppress it, in a kind of civil shrift or confession.<sup>22</sup>

It is a strange thing to observe how high a rate<sup>23</sup> great kings and monarchs do set upon this fruit of friendship whereof we speak: so great, as they purchase it many times at the hazard of their own safety and greatness. For princes, in regard of the distance of their fortune<sup>24</sup> from that of their subjects and servants, cannot gather this fruit except (to make themselves capable thereof) they raise some persons to be, as it were, companions and almost equals to themselves, which many times sorteth to inconvenience.<sup>25</sup> The modern languages give unto such persons the

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mystic's magical and mystic powers.

<sup>9</sup> *divers* many; several.

<sup>10</sup> *talk ... no love* 1 Corinthians 13.1.

<sup>11</sup> *meeteth with it a little* i.e., is somewhat appropriate to it.

<sup>12</sup> Latin, ‘Great city, great solitude’ (Erasmus, *Adages*, 2.4.54).

<sup>13</sup> *less* smaller.

<sup>14</sup> *mere* complete.

<sup>15</sup> *want* lack.

<sup>16</sup> *frame* composition, make-up.

<sup>17</sup> *ease and discharge* easing and releasing.

<sup>18</sup> *fullness and swellings of the heart* The heart was the figurative and literal seat of emotional turmoil.

<sup>19</sup> *diseases of stoppings and suffocations* i.e., those which involve the inhibiting or suppression of the circulation of the various fluids thought crucial to good physical and mental health in ancient and Renaissance medicine (e.g., the humours and the spirits).

<sup>20</sup> Each of these remedies was a purgative or alterative, aimed at curing stoppages or obstructions in the organs here mentioned: *sarza* or *sarsa* is sarsaparilla, a plant from the tropical Americas; *steel* refers to iron or steel filings that were sometimes used in medicines; *flower of sulphur* refers to the mineral sulphur, ground to a powder and used to treat digestive problems; and *castoreum* or *castor* is a substance harvested from scent glands of beavers.

<sup>21</sup> *receipt* recipe (here, a set of directions for the preparation of a medicine).

<sup>22</sup> *civil shrift or confession* i.e., non-religious form of the sacrament of confession, whereby a penitent would confess his/her sins to a priest and receive absolution for them.

<sup>23</sup> *rate* value.

<sup>24</sup> *in regard of the distance of their fortune* i.e., as result of the fact that their station places them at such a distance from their subjects [that friendship is difficult, if not impossible].

<sup>25</sup> *sorteth to inconvenience* results in more or less serious harm or injury.

name of ‘favourites’ or *privadoes*,<sup>26</sup> as if it were matter of grace or conversation. But the Roman name attaineth<sup>27</sup> the true use and cause thereof, naming them *participes curarum*,<sup>28</sup> for it is that which tieth the knot.<sup>29</sup> And we see plainly that this hath been done, not by weak and passionate princes only, but by the wisest and most politic that ever reigned, who have oftentimes joined to themselves some of their servants, whom both themselves have called friends and allowed others likewise to call them in the same manner, using the word which is received<sup>30</sup> between private men.

L[ucius] Sulla, when he commanded Rome, raised Pompey (after, surnamed the Great) to that height that Pompey vaunted himself for Sulla’s over-match. For when he had carried<sup>31</sup> the consulship for a friend of his against the pursuit<sup>32</sup> of Sulla, and that Sulla did a little resent thereat, and began to speak great,<sup>33</sup> Pompey turned upon him again, and in effect bade him be quiet, ‘for that more men adored the sun rising than the sun setting.’<sup>34</sup> With Julius Caesar, Decimus Brutus had obtained that interest as he set him down in his testament for heir in remainder after his nephew. And this was the man that had power with<sup>35</sup> him to draw him forth to his death. For when Caesar would have discharged the Senate<sup>36</sup> in regard of some ill presages, and specially a dream of Calpurnia, this man lifted him gently by the arm out of his chair, telling him he hoped he would not dismiss the Senate till his wife had dreamt a better dream.<sup>37</sup> And it seemeth his favour was so great as<sup>38</sup> Antonius, in a letter which is recited verbatim in one of Cicero’s *Philippics*, calleth him *venefica*, ‘witch,’ as if he had enchanted Caesar.<sup>39</sup> Augustus raised Agrippa (though of mean birth<sup>40</sup>) to that height, as when he consulted with Maecenas about the marriage of his daughter Julia, Maecenas took the liberty to tell him, that ‘he must either marry his daughter to Agrippa, or take away his life: there was no third way, he had made him so great.’<sup>41</sup> With Tiberius Caesar, Sejanus had ascended to that height as they two were termed and reckoned as a pair of friends. Tiberius in a letter to him sayeth, ‘haec pro amicitia nostra non occultavi,’<sup>42</sup> and the whole Senate dedicated an altar to Friendship, as to a goddess, in

<sup>26</sup> *privadoes* Spanish, ‘intimates.’

<sup>27</sup> *attaineth* achieves.

<sup>28</sup> *participes curarum* Latin, ‘Partners in care.’ The Emperor Tiberius used this phrase to describe his favourite Sejanus, who came close to usurping Tiberius’ authority over Rome (M. DiGangi, *Homoerotics of Early Modern Drama*, p. 109).

<sup>29</sup> *for ... knot* i.e., unites them [i.e., the prince and his favourites].

<sup>30</sup> *received* accepted [as the common usage].

<sup>31</sup> *carried* won.

<sup>32</sup> *against the pursuit of Sulla* i.e., against Sulla’s attempts to achieve this Roman office for himself.

<sup>33</sup> *speak great* i.e., speak in such a way as to assert his superiority in the relationship; assertively.

<sup>34</sup> Plutarch, ‘Life of Pompey,’ 1.1137-1139, 1144-46.

<sup>35</sup> *with* over.

<sup>36</sup> *discharged the Senate* i.e., temporarily adjourned the sitting of this governmental body.

<sup>37</sup> *With Julius Caesar ... better dream* For these details about the relationship between Julius Caesar (100-44 BCE), Roman general and dictator and Marcus Junius Brutus (85-42 BCE), tyrannicide, see Plutarch, ‘Life of Julius Caesar,’ 2.1435-36. Caesar named Brutus his heir in case of the death of Caesar’s nephew and heir, Octavian (later the first Roman emperor Augustus) [63 BCE-14 CE].

<sup>38</sup> *favour was so great as* i.e., his standing [with Caesar] was so established and firm that.

<sup>39</sup> *in a letter ... enchanted Caesar* *Philippics* 13.11.

<sup>40</sup> *mean birth* lowly social origins.

<sup>41</sup> *Augustus ... great* Dio Cassius, *Roman History*, 54.6.

<sup>42</sup> ‘haec pro amicitia nostra non occultavi’ Latin, ‘On account of our friendship, I have not hidden these things

respect of the great dearness of friendship between them two.<sup>43</sup> The like or more was between Septimius Severus and Plautianus, for he forced his eldest son to marry the daughter of Plautianus, and would often maintain<sup>44</sup> Plautianus in doing affronts<sup>45</sup> to his son; and did write also in a letter to the Senate, by these words: 'I love the man so well, as I wish he may over-live me.'<sup>46</sup> Now if these princes had been as a Trajan or a Marcus Aurelius,<sup>47</sup> a man might have thought that this had proceeded of an abundant goodness of nature; but being men so wise, of such strength and severity of mind, and so extreme lovers of themselves, as all these were, it proveth most plainly that they found their own felicity (though as great as ever happened to mortal men) but as an half piece,<sup>48</sup> except they might have a friend to make it entire; and yet, which is more, they were princes that had wives, sons, nephews; and yet all these could not supply the comfort of friendship.

It is not to be forgotten what Comineus observeth of his first master, Duke Charles the Hardy;<sup>49</sup> namely, that he would communicate his secrets with none, and least of all, those secrets which troubled him most. Whereupon he goeth on and sayeth, that towards his latter time that closeness<sup>50</sup> did impair and a little perish his understanding.<sup>51</sup> Surely Comineus might have made the same judgment also, if it had pleased him, of his second master Louis XI, whose closeness was indeed his tormentor. The parable of Pythagoras is dark,<sup>52</sup> but true; 'Cor ne edito': 'Eat not the heart.'<sup>53</sup> Certainly, if a man would give it a hard phrase,<sup>54</sup> those that want friends to open themselves unto<sup>55</sup> are cannibals of their own hearts. But one thing is most admirable<sup>56</sup> (wherewith I will conclude this first fruit of friendship), which is, that this communicating of a man's self to his friend works<sup>57</sup> two contrary effects: for it redoubleth joys and cutteth griefs in

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[from you]' (Tacitus, *Annals*, 4.40).

<sup>43</sup> *the whole Senate ... two* Tacitus, *Annals*, 4.74.

<sup>44</sup> *maintain* support.

<sup>45</sup> *doing affronts* offering insults or checks [to].

<sup>46</sup> For the relationship between the Roman emperor Septimius Severus (145/6-211 CE) and the Roman politician Gaius Fulvius Plautianus (d. c. 205 CE), see Dio Cassius, 76.14-16; and Herodian, *History of the Roman Empire*, 3.11-12. Historians generally agree that Severus' patronage of Plautianus undermined the emperor's position, particularly since the connection formed by the marriage of Plautianus' daughter to Severus' son earned the enmity of the empress and her faction.

<sup>47</sup> Both the emperors *Trajan* (53-117 CE) and *Marcus Aurelius* (121-180 CE) had early modern reputations as learned and virtuous pagans; Trajan was an acknowledged patron of the arts and sciences, while Marcus Aurelius was the author of an important work of moral philosophy, the *Meditations*, much celebrated and translated in the early modern period.

<sup>48</sup> *half piece* that which is incomplete or unfinished.

<sup>49</sup> *Comineus* Philippe de Commines (Philippus Cominaeus, c. 1447-1511), French diplomat and writer whose *Mémoires* (1524) details his experiences at the court of Louis XI of France. *Duke Charles the Hardy* Charles the Bold, duke of Burgundy (1433-1477).

<sup>50</sup> *closeness* reservedness [the quality of refusing to share one's thoughts or feelings with another].

<sup>51</sup> *perish his understanding* i.e., undermine or corrupt his reason.

<sup>52</sup> *The parable of Pythagoras is dark* i.e., the saying of the Greek philosopher Pythagoras (fl. c. 530 CE) is difficult to interpret

<sup>53</sup> 'Cor ne edito' Latin, 'Eat not the heart' Attributed to the Greek philosopher Pythagoras (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives*, 8.18).

<sup>54</sup> *hard phrase* i.e., an expression that does prevaricate or soften its meaning.

<sup>55</sup> *want friends to open themselves unto* i.e., lack friends to confide themselves in.

<sup>56</sup> *admirable* capable of provoking wonder.

<sup>57</sup> *works* produces.

halves. For there is no man that imparteth his joys to his friend, but he joyeth the more; and no man that imparteth his griefs to his friend, but he grieveth the less. So that it is in truth of operation<sup>58</sup> upon a man's mind of like virtue<sup>59</sup> as the alchemists use<sup>60</sup> to attribute to their stone<sup>61</sup> for man's body: that it worketh all contrary effects, but still to the good and benefit of nature. But yet, without praying in<sup>62</sup> aid of alchemists, there is a manifest image of this in the ordinary course of nature. For in bodies,<sup>63</sup> union<sup>64</sup> strengtheneth and cherisheth any natural action, and on the other side weakeneth and dulbeth any violent impression, and even so it is of minds.

The second fruit of friendship is [as] healthful and sovereign<sup>65</sup> for the understanding, as the first is for the affections: for friendship maketh indeed a fair day in the affections from storm and tempests, but it maketh daylight in the understanding out of darkness and confusion of thoughts. Neither is this to be understood only of faithful counsel, which a man receiveth from his friend; but before you come to that, certain it is that whosoever hath his mind fraught<sup>66</sup> with many thoughts, his wits and understanding do clarify and break up<sup>67</sup> in the communicating and discoursing with another: he tosseth<sup>68</sup> his thoughts more easily; he marshalleth them more orderly; he seeth how they look when they are turned into words; finally, he waxeth<sup>69</sup> wiser than himself, and that more by an hour's discourse than by a day's meditation. It was well said by Themistocles to the king of Persia, that 'speech was like cloth of Arras, opened and put abroad,<sup>70</sup> whereby the imagery doth appear in figure, whereas in thoughts they lie but as in packs.'<sup>71</sup> Neither is this second fruit of friendship, in opening the understanding, restrained<sup>72</sup> only to such friends as are able to give a man counsel (they indeed are best); but even without that, a man learneth of himself, and bringeth his own thoughts to light, and whetteth<sup>73</sup> his wits as against a stone, which itself cuts not. In a word, a man were better relate himself to a *statua* or picture than to suffer his thoughts to pass in smother.<sup>74</sup>

Add now, to make this second fruit of friendship complete, that other point which lieth more open<sup>75</sup> and falleth within vulgar<sup>76</sup> observation, which is faithful counsel from a friend.

<sup>58</sup> *in truth of operation* in the way it works effectively [on]

<sup>59</sup> *of like virtue* of the same quality.

<sup>60</sup> *use* are accustomed.

<sup>61</sup> *their stone* Alchemists (early modern chemists) were always in pursuit of the so-called philosophers' *stone*, which could reportedly perform miraculous transformations of matter, and thus would be a cure-all for disease.

<sup>62</sup> *praying in* bringing in.

<sup>63</sup> *bodies* inanimate objects.

<sup>64</sup> *union* the bringing together of elements into a single compound.

<sup>65</sup> *sovereign* efficacious.

<sup>66</sup> *fraught* burdened; pre-occupied.

<sup>67</sup> *break up* break down [into constituent elements, in order to facilitate understanding].

<sup>68</sup> *tosseth* moves [around]; manipulates.

<sup>69</sup> *waxeth* grows.

<sup>70</sup> *cloth of Arras* a type of French wall-hanging, ornately embroidered. *spread out* displayed.

<sup>71</sup> *Themistocles ... whereby the imagery ... in packs* Themistocles (c. 524-459 BCE), Athenian politician and general. See Plutarch, 'Life of Themistocles. *packs* heaps [unsorted and confused].

<sup>72</sup> *restrained* confined, limited.

<sup>73</sup> *whetteth* sharpens.

<sup>74</sup> *In a word ... smother* i.e., 'In short, a man would be better to talk to a statue or picture [i.e., something utterly inanimate and incapable of responding] than to allow his thoughts to remain stifled.' Bacon clearly sees speech as indispensable to the clear delineation of ideas. Internal contemplation is insufficient.

<sup>75</sup> *lieth more open* is more obvious.

Heraclitus sayeth well in one of his enigmas, ‘Dry light is ever the best.’<sup>77</sup> And certain it is, that the light that a man receiveth by counsel from another is drier and purer than that which cometh from his own understanding and judgment, which is ever infused and drenched in<sup>78</sup> his affections and customs. So as there is as much difference between the counsel that a friend giveth and that a man giveth himself, as there is between the counsel of a friend and of a flatterer. For there is no such flatterer as is a man’s self; and there is no such remedy against flattery of a man’s self as the liberty<sup>79</sup> of a friend. Counsel is of two sorts: the one concerning manners, the other concerning business. For the first, the best preservative to keep the mind in health is the faithful admonition of a friend. The calling of a man’s self to a strict account<sup>80</sup> is a medicine, sometime, too piercing and corrosive. Reading good books of morality is a little flat<sup>81</sup> and dead. Observing our faults in others is sometimes improper<sup>82</sup> for our case. But the best receipt<sup>83</sup> (best, I say, to work, and best to take) is the admonition of a friend. It is a strange thing to behold what gross errors and extreme absurdities many (especially of the greater sort) do commit for want of a friend to tell them of them, to the great damage both of their fame and fortune. For, as St. James sayeth, they are as men that ‘look sometimes into a glass, and presently forget their own shape and favour.’<sup>84</sup>

As for business, a man may think, if he will, that two eyes see no more than one; or that a gamester seeth always more than a looker-on; or that a man in anger is as wise as he that hath said over the four and twenty letters;<sup>85</sup> or that a musket may be shot off as well upon the arm as upon a rest;<sup>86</sup> and such other fond and high imaginations,<sup>87</sup> to think himself all in all.<sup>88</sup> But when all is done, the help of good counsel is that which setteth business straight. And if any man think that he will take counsel, but it shall be by pieces,<sup>89</sup> asking counsel in one business of one man, and in another business of another man, it is well (that is to say, better perhaps than if he asked none at all), but he runneth<sup>90</sup> two dangers: one, that he shall not be faithfully counseled, for it is a rare thing, except it be from a perfect and entire friend, to have counsel given, but such as shall

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<sup>76</sup> *vulgar* common, everyday.

<sup>77</sup> *Heraclitus ... best* ‘The dry light is the best soul which flieth out of the body as lightning doth out of the cloud, but that which is joined with the body being full of corporeal passions, is a gross vapour, dark and massy, and cannot flame, rise, or shoot out like lightning’ (Plutarch, ‘Life of Romulus,’ 1.105). *Heraclitus* (fl. c. 500 BCE), Greek philosopher, whose remaining fragments suggest a writer who adopted a style that aimed at provoking questions, gaining him the epithet ‘the obscure one.’

<sup>78</sup> *drenched in* overwhelmed by.

<sup>79</sup> *liberty* here, the a friend’s privilege of speaking freely.

<sup>80</sup> ‘To call someone to a strict account’ means ‘to hold them unflinchingly accountable for their actions, beliefs, and speech.’

<sup>81</sup> *flat* unanimated, uninteresting.

<sup>82</sup> *improper* inappropriate.

<sup>83</sup> *receipt* direction.

<sup>84</sup> *St James ... favour* James 1.23-24.

<sup>85</sup> *said over the four and twenty letters* i.e., the early modern alphabet (a tactic to gain time to think rather than striking out in anger, like the modern advice to ‘count to ten’ before reacting to some provoking word or action).

<sup>86</sup> *a musket ... rest* i.e., a shooter might use his ‘arm’ rather than a tripod or other artificial support (‘rest’) to steady his rifle (‘musket’) for firing.

<sup>87</sup> *fond and high imaginations* foolish and exaggerated conceptions, notions.

<sup>88</sup> *all in all* completely self-sufficient.

<sup>89</sup> *by pieces* i.e., piecemeal.

<sup>90</sup> *runneth* risks.

be bowed and crooked<sup>91</sup> to some ends which he hath that giveth it; the other, that he shall have counsel given hurtful and unsafe<sup>92</sup> (though with good meaning<sup>93</sup>), and mixed partly of mischief<sup>94</sup> and partly of remedy, even as if you would call a physician that is thought good for the cure of the disease you complain of, but is unacquainted with your body; and therefore may put you in way for a present cure,<sup>95</sup> but overthroweth your health in some other kind, and so cure the disease and kill the patient. But a friend that is wholly acquainted with a man's estate<sup>96</sup> will beware, by furthering any present business, how he dasheth upon other inconvenience.<sup>97</sup> And, therefore, rest not upon scattered<sup>98</sup> counsels: they will rather distract and mislead, than settle and direct.

After these two noble fruits of friendship (peace in the affections, and support of the judgment), followeth the last fruit, which is like the pomegranate, full of many kernels; I mean aid and bearing a part in all actions and occasions. Here, the best way to represent to life the manifold use of friendship is to cast<sup>99</sup> and see how many things there are which a man cannot do himself, and then it will appear that it was a sparing speech<sup>100</sup> of the ancients to say, that 'a friend is another himself,'<sup>101</sup> for that a friend is far more than himself. Men have their time, and die many times in desire of some things which they principally take to heart—the bestowing of a child,<sup>102</sup> the finishing of a work, or the like. If a man have a true friend, he may rest almost secure that the care of those things will continue after him. So that a man hath, as it were, two lives in his desires. A man hath a body, and that body is confined to a place, but where friendship is, all offices<sup>103</sup> of life are, as it were, granted to him and his deputy, for he may exercise them<sup>104</sup> by his friend. How many things are there which a man cannot with any face or comeliness<sup>105</sup> say or do himself? A man can scarce allege his own merits with modesty, much less extol them; a man cannot sometimes brook to supplicate<sup>106</sup> or beg, and a number of the like. But all these things are graceful in a friend's mouth which are blushing<sup>107</sup> in a man's own.<sup>108</sup> So again, a man's person hath many proper relations<sup>109</sup> which he cannot put off. A man cannot speak to his son but as a father; to his wife but as a husband; to his enemy but upon terms,<sup>110</sup> whereas a friend may speak

<sup>91</sup> *bowed and crooked* perverted and twisted.

<sup>92</sup> *unsafe* unsound.

<sup>93</sup> *meaning* intentions.

<sup>94</sup> *mischief* harm, injury; perhaps, figuratively, 'sickness, disease.'

<sup>95</sup> *put you in way for a present cure* i.e., set you along the path to an immediate cure.

<sup>96</sup> *man's estate* the condition of being an adult male; mature state of life.

<sup>97</sup> *dasheth upon other inconvenience* comes upon a different injury.

<sup>98</sup> *scattered* separate.

<sup>99</sup> *cast* reckon, calculate, make a mental list of.

<sup>100</sup> *sparing speech* i.e. one that underestimates.

<sup>101</sup> '*a friend is another himself*' This Latin proverb occurs in many ancient writers, most famously (perhaps) in Cicero's *Laelius: De Amicitia* ('Laelius: On Friendship'). See excerpts in *Online Companion*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>102</sup> *bestowing a child* i.e. ensuring his or her future (through a dowry, apprenticeship, guardianship, etc.).

<sup>103</sup> *offices* duties, responsibilities.

<sup>104</sup> *exercise them* fulfill them.

<sup>105</sup> *face or comeliness* modesty or handsomeness in action [generosity].

<sup>106</sup> *brook to supplicate* i.e., bear to beg or ask meekly [for something].

<sup>107</sup> *blushing* shameful, embarrassing.

<sup>108</sup> *How ... own* Cicero makes this same point in 'Laelius,' *Online Companion*, p.9.

<sup>109</sup> *proper relations* i.e., specific relationships and responsibilities that are an aspect of his public and private roles in the world.

<sup>110</sup> *upon terms* i.e., on agreed-upon conditions (such as between enemies engaging in negotiations after a conflict).

as the case requires, and not as it sorteth with the person.<sup>111</sup> But to enumerate these things were endless; I have given the rule, where a man cannot fitly play his own part: if he have not a friend, he may quit the stage.

## OF BEAUTY

Virtue is like a rich stone, best plain set;<sup>112</sup> and surely virtue is best in a body that is comely,<sup>113</sup> though not of delicate features; and that hath rather dignity of presence than beauty of aspect.<sup>114</sup> Neither is it almost<sup>115</sup> seen that very beautiful persons are otherwise of great virtue; as if nature were rather busy not to err than in labour to produce excellency. And therefore they prove accomplished, but not of great spirit; and study rather behaviour than virtue.<sup>116</sup> But this holds not always,<sup>117</sup> for Augustus Caesar, Titus Vespasianus, Philip le Bel of France, Edward IV of England, Alcibiades of Athens, Ismael the Sophy of Persia<sup>118</sup> were all high and great spirits,<sup>119</sup> and yet the most beautiful men of their times. In beauty, that of favour is more than that of colour,<sup>120</sup> and that of decent and gracious motion more than that of favour. That is the best part of beauty, which a picture cannot express; no, nor the first sight of the life.

There is no excellent beauty that hath not some strangeness in the proportion.<sup>121</sup> A man cannot tell whether Apelles or Albert Durer were the more trifler; whereof the one would make a personage by geometrical proportions; the other, by taking the best parts out of divers faces, to make one excellent.<sup>122</sup> Such personages, I think, would please nobody but the painter that made

<sup>111</sup> *sorteth with the person* i.e., as it is appropriate to the particular circumstances, without any regard for the public or private roles of the friend he is addressing.

<sup>112</sup> *plain set* mounted in a simple setting.

<sup>113</sup> *comely* attractive; well-proportioned.

<sup>114</sup> *presence* deportment. *aspect* appearance.

<sup>115</sup> *almost* for the most part.

<sup>116</sup> *study rather behaviour than virtue* i.e., concentrate on improving their manners or outward appearance rather than their inner characters or virtues.

<sup>117</sup> *but this holds not always* i.e., this general principle is not always true.

<sup>118</sup> *Caesar Augustus* Octavius Caesar Augustus, emperor of Rome, nephew and heir to Julius Caesar; he defeated Mark Antony and became the sole ruler of the empire; the historian Suetonius notes that Augustus was handsome. *Titus Vespasianus* Titus Flavius Vespasianus (39-81 CE), emperor of Rome (79-81), as well as a successful general. *Philip le Bel of France* King Philip IV of France [1268-1314], also called the Fair (le Bel). *Edward IV of England* (1442-1483), king, successful military strategist and general; he was handsome and unusually tall. *Alcibiades of Athens* successful Athenian general; in his youth especially, he was reputedly very handsome, and sexually licentious, as well as an intimate friend and perhaps a lover of Socrates. In Plato's *Symposium* (216-223), Alcibiades details his failed seduction of Socrates, who spends the night in the same bed as Alcibiades without succumbing to sexual temptation. Plutarch details Alcibiades' bisexual propensities, and Socrates' love for Alcibiades as demonstrated in the philosopher's attentive guidance and education of the young man. See 'Life of Alcibiades,' *Online Companion*, pp. 4-8. *Ismael the Sophy of Persia* Ismail I (1487-1524), Shah of Iran and founder of the Safavid Empire, skilled military leader and conqueror of all of Iran; also a skilled poet.

<sup>119</sup> *high and great spirits* i.e., valiant and aspiring men.

<sup>120</sup> *In beauty ... colour* i.e., a man's beauty lies more in the cast of the face (the arrangement of its features) than in its complexion.

<sup>121</sup> *There ... proportion* For this commonplace about the way beauty is always accompanied by some blemish, irregularity, or defect, see Cicero, *De Inventione*, 2.1.3.

<sup>122</sup> *A man cannot tell ... excellent Apelles* celebrated Greek painter; however, it is usually Zeuxis, another famous ancient painter, who is reported to have painted his famous picture of Helen of Troy by combining the best features



them. Not but I think a painter may make a better face than ever was, but he must do it by a kind of felicity (as a musician that maketh an excellent air in music) and not by rule. A man shall see faces, that if you examine them part by part, you shall find never a good, and yet altogether do well. If it be true that the principal part of beauty is in decent motion, certainly it is no marvel though persons in years<sup>123</sup> seem many times more amiable, *pulchrorum autumnus pulcher*;<sup>124</sup> for no youth can be comely but by pardon, and considering the youth<sup>125</sup> as to make up the comeliness. Beauty is as summer fruits, which are easy to corrupt and cannot last; and for the most part it makes a dissolute<sup>126</sup> youth, and an age<sup>127</sup> a little out of countenance;<sup>128</sup> but yet certainly again, if it light well,<sup>129</sup> it maketh virtue shine, and vices blush.

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of five of the lovely virgins whom the commissioners of the painting, the people of Crotona, offered him as models. *Albert Durer* Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528), painter and engraver, who offered models for drawing the human body in his *De Symmetria Partium* (1532). *divers* several, different.

<sup>123</sup> *in years* older (i.e., not youths).

<sup>124</sup> *Latin*, “The autumn of beautiful persons is beautiful.” Plutarch attributes the saying to Euripides. See ‘Life of Alcibiades,’ 1.438. Cf. the excerpts in the *Online Companion*, Plutarch, p. 4.

<sup>125</sup> *youth* i.e., the youthfulness.

<sup>126</sup> *dissolute* licentious, given to luxury and sensuality.

<sup>127</sup> *age* i.e., an older person.

<sup>128</sup> *out of countenance* abashed, ashamed, discomfited.

<sup>129</sup> *light well* i.e., if it by chance alights on a virtuous or worthy person.