

The Prince

by Niccolo Machiavelli

To the great Lorenzo Di Piero De Medici

Those who try to obtain the favourable attention of a prince are accustomed to come before him with the things that they value most, or which they think the prince will most enjoy. As a result, one often sees expensive gifts such as horses, weapons, cloths of gold, precious stones, and similar ornaments presented to princes.

Desiring therefore to present myself with some proof of my devotion towards you, I have found that the possession I value above all is the knowledge of the actions of great men. This knowledge has been acquired by long experience in contemporary affairs, and a continual study of history. I have reflected on this long and carefully, and I now send you these reflections presented in a small volume.

And although I consider this work unworthy of your attention, nevertheless I trust that you will be kind enough to accept it. The best gift I can offer you is the opportunity of understanding in the shortest time all that I have learnt in so many years, and with so many troubles and dangers. I have written the work in a simple and direct way, so that it will be accepted not for its style but for the importance of the theme.

I do not agree with those who regard it as a presumption if a man of low and humble condition dares to discuss and criticise the concerns of princes. Those who draw pictures place themselves below in the plain to understand the nature of the mountains and other high places, and in order to understand the plains place themselves upon high mountains. Similarly, to understand the nature of the people one needs to be a prince, and to understand princes one needs to be of the people.

Take then, this little gift in the spirit in which I send it. If it is carefully read and considered by you, you will learn my extreme desire that you should attain that greatness which fortune and your other attributes promise. And if, my lord, from the mountain top of your greatness, you will sometimes turn your eyes to these lower regions, you will see how undeservedly I suffer great and continued bad fortune.

THE PRINCE

CHAPTER 1

HOW MANY KINDS OF PRINCIPALITIES THERE ARE AND BY WHAT MEANS THEY ARE ACQUIRED

There are only two kinds of states, republics or principalities.

Principalities are either hereditary, where the family in control has been long established; or they are new.

The new principalities are either entirely new, as was Milan to Francesco Sforza, or they are, as it were, members added to the hereditary state of the prince who has acquired them, as was the kingdom of Naples to that of the King of Spain.

Such states thus acquired are either accustomed to live under a prince, or to live in freedom. They are acquired either by the military power of the prince himself or of others, or else by fortune or by ability.

CHAPTER 2

CONCERNING HEREDITARY PRINCIPALITIES

I will leave out all discussion of republics, and will address myself only to principalities. In doing so I will keep to the order indicated above, and discuss how such principalities are to be ruled and preserved.

There are fewer difficulties in holding hereditary states, particularly those long accustomed to the family of their prince, than new ones. The reason is that in such states it is sufficient only for the prince to maintain the customs of those who ruled before him, and to deal carefully with circumstances as they arise. In this way a prince of average powers can maintain himself in his state unless he loses it by some extraordinary and excessive force. If he loses it in this way, whenever anything unfortunate happens to the one who took it from him, he will get it back.

We have in Italy, for example, the Duke of Ferrara, who lasted against the attacks of the Venetians in 1484, and those of Pope Julius in 1510, only because he had been long established in his principality. The hereditary prince has less cause and less necessity to offend, hence it happens that he will be more loved. Unless extraordinary wickedness causes him to be hated, it is reasonable to expect that his subjects will be naturally well disposed towards him, and the longer the duration of his rule, the more likely that the memories and motives that encourage change are lost. One change always increases the possibility of another.

CHAPTER 3

CONCERNING MIXED PRINCIPALITIES

But the difficulties occur in a new principality, particularly in mixed principalities where there is a new addition to an old state. These difficulties arise chiefly from an inherent problem which is there in all new principalities. People change their rulers willingly, hoping to better themselves, and this hope induces

them to take up arms against their prince. However they are deceiving themselves, because they afterwards find by experience they have gone from bad to worse. This is partly a result of another natural and common necessity, which is that those who have submitted to the new prince have to support his army and suffer infinite other hardships which he must put upon his new acquisition.

In this way, you not only have enemies in all those whom you have injured in seizing that principality, but you also are not able to keep those friends who put you there because you cannot satisfy them in the way they expected. You cannot take strong measures against them, feeling bound to them. For, although one may be very strong in armed forces, yet in entering a state one always needs the cooperation of the local people.

For these reasons Louis the Twelfth, King of France, quickly occupied Milan, and as quickly lost it. To turn him out the first time it only required Lodovico's own forces, because those who had opened the gates to Louis, finding themselves deceived in their hopes of future benefit, would not put up with the cruel treatment of the new prince. It is very true that, after acquiring rebellious states a second time they are not so lightly lost afterwards. This is because the prince, with little reluctance, will take the opportunity of the rebellion to punish the rebels, to clear out the suspects, and to strengthen himself in the weakest places. Thus to cause France to lose Milan the first time, it was enough for the Duke Lodovico to raise rebellions on the borders. But to cause him to lose it a second time, it was necessary to bring the whole world against him.

Nevertheless Milan was taken from France both the first and the second time. The general reasons for the first time have been discussed. It remains to name those for the second, and to see what resources the King of France had, and what any one in his situation would have had for maintaining himself more securely in his acquisition .

New additions to an ancient state are either of the same country and language, or they are not. When they are, it is easier to hold them, especially when they have not been accustomed to self-government. To hold them securely it is enough to have destroyed the family of the prince who was ruling them, because the two peoples preserving in other things the old conditions, and not being unlike in customs, will live quietly together. This can be seen in Brittany Burgundy, Gascony, and Normandy, which have been bound to France a very long time. Although there may be some difference in language, nevertheless the customs are alike, and the people are easily able to get on amongst themselves. The prince who wishes to hold such additions, has only to bear in mind two considerations: first that the family of their former prince is destroyed, and second, that neither their laws nor their taxes are altered, so that in a very short time they will become entirely integrated in the old principality.

But when states are acquired in a country differing in language, customs or laws, there are difficulties, and good fortune and great energy are needed to hold them. One of the most positive moves would be for the prince to go and reside there. This would make his position more secure. Because, if one is there, problems are seen as they spring up, and one can quickly remedy them. But if one is not at hand, the problems are heard of only when they are great, and then one can no longer remedy them. Besides this, the country is not exploited by officials and the subjects are satisfied by easy access to the prince. Thus, wishing to be good, they have more cause to love him, and wishing to be otherwise, to fear him. He who would attack that state from the outside must have the greatest caution. As long as the prince resides there it can only be taken from him with the greatest difficulty.

The other and better course is to establish settlements (colonies) in one or two places which will tie the

state to you. If you do not do this, you will have to keep part of your army there. A prince does not have to spend much on such settlements, for with little or no expense he can send the settlers there and keep them there. He offends only a minority of the citizens from whom he takes land and houses to give to the new settlers. Those whom he offends, remaining poor and scattered, are never able to injure him; while the rest being uninjured are easily kept quiet, and at the same time are anxious not to cause trouble in case they lose their land and houses. In conclusion, I say that these settlements are not costly, they are more faithful, they injure less, and the injured, as has been said, being poor and scattered, cannot hurt. However, one has to remark that men ought either to be well treated or crushed because they can revenge themselves of lighter injuries, but of more serious ones they cannot. Therefore the injury that is to be done to someone ought to be of such a kind that one does not stand in fear of revenge.

However if instead of settlements the prince maintains armed men there, one spends much more, having to spend on the military presence all the income from the state. Then the acquisition turns into a loss, and many more are upset, because the whole state is injured. Through having to shift the soldiers from one place to another, all experience hardship, and all become hostile. They become enemies who, while beaten on their own ground, are yet able to do hurt. For every reason, therefore, such guards are as useless as a settlement is useful.

The prince who holds a country differing in language, customs and law ought to make himself the head and defender of his less powerful neighbours. He should weaken the more powerful amongst them, taking care that no foreigner as powerful as himself shall, by any accident, get established there. It will always happen that some powerful foreigner will be invited in by those who are unhappy with the prince, either through excess of ambition or through fear. The Romans were brought into Greece by the Aetolians, and in every other country where they established themselves, they were brought in by the local people. The usual course of affairs is that, as soon as a powerful foreigner enters a country, all the subject states are drawn to him, moved by the hatred which they feel against the existing prince. So the foreigner does not to have any trouble winning them over to himself, for all of them quickly support the state which he has acquired there. He has only to take care that they do not get hold of too much power and too much authority. Then with his own forces, and with their cooperation, he can easily keep down the more powerful of them, so as to remain entirely master in the country. If this business is not properly managed, he will soon lose what he has acquired, and while he does hold it he will have endless difficulties and troubles.

The Romans, in the countries which they took over, closely followed these principles. They sent settlements and maintained friendly relations with the minor powers, without increasing the strength of the minor powers. They kept down the greater states, and did not allow any strong foreign powers to gain authority. ... Thus the Romans did in these instances what all careful princes ought to do, who have to regard not for only present troubles, but also for future ones. When problems are noted before they occur, it is easy to remedy them. But if you wait until they approach, the medicine is too late because the illness has become incurable. Thus doctors say that the beginning of a severe fever is easy to cure but difficult to detect. In the course of time not having been either detected or treated in the beginning, it becomes easy to detect but difficult to cure. This also happens in affairs of state, for when the evils that arise have been predicted (which only wise men can do), they can be quickly dealt with. But when, through not having been predicted, they have been permitted to grow in a way that every one can see them, there is no longer a remedy. Therefore, the Romans, predicting troubles, dealt with them at once, and, even to avoid a war, would not let them come to a head. They knew that war cannot be avoided, but can only be delayed to the advantage of others...

France however ... did the opposite of those things which ought to be done to retain a state composed of differing elements. King Louis XII was brought into Italy by the ambition of the Venetians who desired to obtain half the state of Lombardy by his intervention. I will not blame the course taken by the king, because, wishing to get established in Italy, and having no friends there - seeing rather that every door was shut to him owing to the conduct of Charles - he was forced to accept those friendships which he could get. He would have succeeded very quickly in his design if in other matters he had not made some mistakes. The king, however, having acquired Lombardy got back at once the authority which the previous king, Charles, had lost. Genoa yielded, the Florentines became his friends. Many other powerful people and groups made advances to him to become his friend. Only then the Venetians realized the foolishness of the course taken by them. In order that they might secure two towns in Lombardy, they had made the king master of two-thirds of Italy.

With little difficulty the king could have maintained his position in Italy, if he had observed the rules laid down above, and kept all his friends secure and protected. For although they were numerous, they were both weak and frightened. Some were afraid of the Church, some of the Venetians. Thus they would always have been forced to stand with him, and because of this he could easily have made himself secure against those who remained powerful. But he was no sooner in Milan than he did the contrary by assisting Pope Alexander to occupy the Romagna. It never occurred to him that by this action he was weakening himself, losing friends and those who had rushed to be his friend. He increased the strength of the Church by adding a lot of earthly power to the spiritual, thus giving it greater authority. Having committed this prime error, Louis was forced to follow it up, so much so that, to put an end to the ambition of Pope Alexander, and to prevent his becoming the master of Tuscany, he was himself forced to come into Italy.

And as if it were not enough to have given power to the Church, and to have lost his friends, he, wishing to have the kingdom of Naples, divided it with the King of Spain, and where he was the prime ruler in Italy he takes an associate, with the result that the ambitious of that country and the discontents of his own had somewhere to shelter. Whereas he could have left in the kingdom his own appointment as king, he drove him out, to put one there who was able to drive him, Louis, out in turn.

The wish to acquire is in truth very natural and common, and men always do so when they can. For this they should be praised not blamed. But when they cannot do so, yet wish to do so by any means, then there is foolishness and error. Therefore, if France could have attacked Naples with her own forces she ought to have done so. If she could not, then she ought not to have divided it. The division of the state which she made with the Venetians in Lombardy was justified by the excuse that by it she gained a presence in Italy. This other division deserved blame, because it did not have the excuse of that necessity.

Louis made these five errors. He destroyed the minor powers. He increased the strength of one of the greater powers in Italy - the church. He brought in a foreign power. He did not settle in the country. He did not create settlements. If he had lived, these errors were not enough to injure him. However, he made a sixth error by taking the Venetians' states away from them. He ought never to have consented to their ruin, for they, being powerful, would always have kept others from invading Lombardy...

Thus King Louis lost Lombardy by not having followed any of the principles observed by those who have taken possession of countries and wished to retain them. Nor is there anything unusual in this, but much that is reasonable and quite natural. As I have told others, the French did not understand the principles of controlling a state, otherwise they would not have allowed the Church to reach such greatness. And in fact it has been seen that the greatness of the Church and of Spain in Italy has been caused by France, and her ruin may be attributed to them. From this a general rule is drawn which never or rarely fails: that he who

is the cause of another becoming powerful is ruined. This is because that success has been brought about either by cleverness or by force, and both are distrusted by the person who has been raised to power.

CHAPTER 4

WHY THE KINGDOM OF DARIUS, CONQUERED BY ALEXANDER, DID NOT REBEL AGAINST THE SUCCESSORS OF ALEXANDER AT HIS DEATH

Considering the difficulties which men have had holding on to a newly acquired state, some might wonder how the countries conquered by Alexander the Great remained loyal to his successors. Alexander became the master of Asia in a few years, and died before completing the task. It thus might appear reasonable that the whole empire would have rebelled. Nevertheless his successors maintained themselves, and had to meet no other difficulty than that which arose among themselves from their own ambitions.

These are the reasons why they survived. The principalities of which one has record are found to be governed in two different ways: either (1) by a prince, with a body of servants, who assist him to govern the kingdom as ministers by his favour and permission; or (2) by a prince and barons, who hold that rank by inheritance and not by appointment by the prince. Such barons have states and their own subjects, who recognize them as lords and have a natural loyalty to them. Those states that are governed by a prince and his servants respect their prince more, because in all the country there is no one who is recognized as having greater power than him. If they show respect to another, they do it as to a minister and official to whom they do not bear any particular loyalty.

The examples of these two governments in our time are the Turk and the King of France. The entire country of the Turk is governed by one lord, the others are his servants. He divides his kingdom into regions, and sends different administrators there. He shifts and changes them as he chooses. But the King of France is placed in the midst of an ancient body of lords, acknowledged by their own subjects and loved by them. They have their own rights, and the king cannot take these away except with some risk of rebellion. Therefore, there would be great difficulties in seizing the state of the Turk, but, once it is conquered, great ease in holding it. The causes of the difficulties in seizing the kingdom of the Turk are that the invader cannot be called in by the princes of the kingdom. Nor can he hope to be assisted in his designs by the rebellion of those whom the prince has around him. This arises from the reasons given above. His ministers, being all slaves and servants, cannot be easily bribed, and one can expect little advantage from them when they have been bribed, as they cannot carry the people with them. Hence, he who attacks the Turk must bear in mind that he will find him united, and he will have to rely more on his own strength than on the rebellion of others. But, once the Turk has been conquered in the field in such a way that he cannot replace his armies, there is nothing to fear but the family of this prince. Once they are killed, there remains no one to fear. The others have no credit with the people, and as the conqueror did not rely on them before his victory, so he ought not to fear them after it.

The contrary happens in kingdoms governed like that of France. One can easily enter there by gaining the cooperation of some baron of the kingdom for one always finds dissatisfied barons who desire a change. Such men, for the reasons given, can open the way into the state and make the victory easy. But if you wish to hold the kingdom afterwards, you meet with infinite difficulties, both from those who have assisted you and from those you have crushed. Nor is it enough for you to have destroyed the family of the prince, because the lords that remain make themselves the heads of fresh movements against you. Because you are unable either to satisfy or destroy them, that state is lost whenever time brings the opportunity.

Now if you will consider what was the nature of the government of Darius, you will find it similar to the kingdom of the Turk. Therefore it was only necessary for Alexander, first to conquer him in battle, and then to take the country from him. After the victory, Darius being killed, the state remained secure to Alexander for the above reasons. And if his successors had been united they would have enjoyed it securely and at their ease, for there were no rebellions raised in the kingdom except those they caused themselves.

But it is impossible to easily hold states constituted like that of France. Hence there were frequent rebellions against the Romans in Spain, France, and Greece, because of the many principalities there were in these states. As long as the memory of them lasted, the Romans always held an insecure possession. However, with the power and long continuance of the empire, the memory of them passed away, and the Romans then became secure possessors. And later when the states fought amongst themselves, each one was able to attach to himself his own parts of the country, according to the authority he had assumed there. The family of the former lord had been destroyed, and so none other than the Romans were acknowledged.

When these things are remembered no one will wonder at the ease with which Alexander held the Empire of Asia. And none will wonder at the difficulties which others have had to keep an acquisition, such as Pyrrhus and many more. This is not caused by the ability of the conqueror, but by the lack of uniformity in the subject state.

CHAPTER 5

CONCERNING THE WAY TO GOVERN CITIES OR PRINCIPALITIES WHICH LIVED UNDER THEIR OWN LAWS BEFORE THEY WERE JOINED TO ANOTHER PRINCIPALITY

Whenever those states which have been acquired have been accustomed to live under their own laws and in freedom, there are three courses for those who wish to hold them. The first is to ruin them, the next is to reside there in person, the third is to permit them to live under their own laws, drawing a regular payment from the state, and establishing within it a governing group which will keep it friendly to you. Because such a government, being created by the prince, knows that it cannot stand without his friendship and interest, it tries hard to support him. Therefore he who would keep a city accustomed to freedom will hold it more easily by the means of its own citizens than in any other way.

There are, for example, the Spartans and the Romans. The Spartans held Athens and Thebes, establishing there a governing group, nevertheless they lost them. The Romans, in order to hold Capua, Carthage, and Numantia largely destroyed them, and did not lose them. They wished to hold Greece as the Spartans held it, making it free and permitting its laws, and did not succeed. So to hold it they were forced to destroy many cities in the country. There was, in fact, no safe way to retain them otherwise than by ruining them. And he who becomes master of a city accustomed to freedom and does not destroy it, may expect to be destroyed by it, because it always has liberty and its ancient rights as a way of uniting a rebellion. Neither time nor benefits will ever cause it to forget these. Whatever you may do to protect against rebellion, the people never forget freedom or their old rights unless they are scattered.

But when cities or countries are accustomed to living under a prince and that prince's family is destroyed, they, being on the one hand accustomed to obey and on the other hand not having the old prince, cannot

agree in making one from amongst themselves, and they do not know how to govern themselves. For this reason they are very slow to rebel. A new prince can become accepted as their leader and secure them much more easily. But in republics there is more energy, greater hatred, and more desire for revenge, which will never permit them to allow the memory of their former liberty to rest. So the safest way is to destroy them or to reside there.

CHAPTER 6

CONCERNING NEW PRINCIPALITIES WHICH ARE ACQUIRED BY ONE'S OWN ARMS AND ABILITY

Let no one be surprised if, in speaking of entirely new principalities as I shall do, I always refer to the highest examples both of prince and of state. This is because men, walking almost always in paths beaten by others and imitating their deeds, are still unable to keep entirely to the ways of others or attain the power of those they imitate. A wise man ought always to follow the paths beaten by great men, and to imitate those who have been the best, so that if his ability does not equal theirs, at least it will have some traces of it. He should act like those who are skilled at shooting with a bow and arrow who, designing to hit the mark which yet appears too far distant, and knowing the limits to which the strength of their bow attains, take aim much higher than the mark. This is not done in order to reach a great height, but to be able with the aid of so high an aim to hit the mark they wish to reach.

In entirely new principalities, where there is a new prince, more or less difficulty is found in keeping them depending on whether there is more or less ability in him who has acquired the state. Now, because becoming a prince from a private station requires either ability or good luck, it is clear that one or other of these things will reduce many difficulties to some degree. Nevertheless, he who has relied least on good luck will be more strongly established. Further, it facilitates matters when the prince, having no other state, is forced to reside there in person.

But to come to those who, by their own ability and not through fortune, have risen to be princes, I say that Moses, Cyrus, Romulus Theseus, and such like are the most excellent examples. And although one may not discuss Moses, he having been a mere instrument of the will of God, yet he ought to be admired, if only for that favour which made him worthy to speak with God. But in considering Cyrus and others who have acquired or founded kingdoms, all will be found to be admirable; and if their particular deeds and conduct are considered, they will not be found to be less than those of Moses, even though he had so great a guide. And in examining their actions and lives one cannot see that they owed anything to fortune beyond opportunity, which brought them the material to change into the form which seemed best to them. Without that opportunity their powers of mind would have been wasted, and without those powers the opportunity would have come in vain.

It was necessary, therefore, to Moses that he should find the people of Israel in Egypt held as slaves by the Egyptians, in order that they should be disposed to follow him so as to be delivered out of slavery. It was necessary that Romulus should not remain in Alba and that he should be abandoned at his birth, in order that he should become King of Rome and founder of that country. It was necessary that Cyrus should find the Persians unhappy with the government of the Medes, and the Medes soft and weak through their long peace. Theseus could not have shown his ability if he had not found the Athenians scattered. These opportunities, therefore, made those men fortunate, and their great ability enabled them to recognize the opportunity whereby their country was made strong and famous.

Those who by brave deeds become princes, like these men, acquire principality with difficulty, but they keep it with ease. The difficulties they have in acquiring it rise in part from the new rules and methods which they are forced to introduce to establish their government and its security. And it ought to be remembered that there is nothing more difficult to take in hand, more dangerous to conduct, or more uncertain in its success, than to take the lead in the introduction of a new order of things. This because the innovator has for enemies all those who have done well under the old conditions, and not very active defenders in those who may do well under the new. This coolness arises partly from fear of those against it, who have the laws on their side, and partly from the doubts of men, who do not readily believe in new things until they have had a long experience of them. Thus it happens that whenever those who are against it have the opportunity to attack, they do it with great energy, while the others defend without commitment, in such a way that the prince is threatened along with them.

It is necessary, therefore, if we desire to discuss this matter thoroughly, to inquire whether these innovators can rely on themselves or have to depend on others. That is to say, whether, to achieve their goals, do they have to use prayers or can they use force? In the first instance they always succeed badly, and never achieve anything; but when they can rely on themselves and use force, then they are rarely at risk. Hence all armed religious leaders have conquered, and the unarmed ones have been destroyed. Besides the reasons mentioned, the nature of the people is variable, and while it is easy to persuade them, it is difficult to fix them in that persuasion. Thus it is necessary to take such measures that, when they no longer believe, it may be possible to make them believe by force.

If Moses, Cyrus, Theseus, and Romulus had been unarmed they could not have enforced their constitutions for long - as happened in our time to Fra Girolamo Savonarola. He was ruined with his new order of things immediately the people no longer believed in him, and he had no means of keeping the loyalty of those who believed or of making the unbelievers believe. Therefore armed religious leaders have great difficulties in achieving their goals, for all their dangers are in the achievement. Yet, with ability, they will overcome them. But when these dangers are overcome, and those who envied their success are destroyed, they will begin to be respected, and they will continue afterwards to be powerful, secure, respected, and happy.

To these great examples I wish to add a lesser one, but it is still like the others and is a good example. It is Hiero the Syracusan. This man rose from nothing to be prince of Syracuse. Nor did he, either, owe anything to fortune but opportunity. The Syracusans, who were under threat, chose him for their captain. Afterwards he was rewarded by being made their prince. He was of so great ability, even as a private citizen, that one who writes of him says he needed only a kingdom to be king. This man got rid of the old army, organized the new, gave up old agreements, made new ones; and as he had his own soldiers and supporters, on such foundations he was able to build anything. Thus while he had had much trouble in acquiring, he had but little in keeping.

CHAPTER 7

CONCERNING NEW PRINCIPALITIES WHICH ARE ACQUIRED EITHER BY THE ARMS OF OTHERS OR BY GOOD FORTUNE

Those who solely by good fortune become princes from being private citizens have little trouble in rising, but have much trouble in staying at the top. They do not have any difficulties on the way up, because they

fly, but they have many when they reach the top. Such are those to whom some state is given either for money or by the favour of him who gives it. This happened to many in Greece, in the cities of Ionia and of the Hellespont, where princes were made by Darius, in order that they might hold the cities both for his security and his glory. Similar to those were those leaders who, by bribery of the soldiers, from being citizens came to empire. Such stand simply upon the favour and the fortune of him who has given them the position - two most inconstant and unstable things. Neither have they the knowledge required for the position, because, unless they are men of great worth and ability, it is not reasonable to expect that they should know how to command having always lived in a private condition. In addition, they cannot hold their position, because they do not have forces which they can keep friendly and faithful.

States that rise unexpectedly, then, like all other things in nature which are born and grow rapidly, cannot establish their foundations in such a way that the first storm will not destroy them; unless, as is said, those who unexpectedly become princes are men of so much ability that they know they have to be prepared at once to hold that which fortune has thrown to them. Thus those foundations, which others have laid before they became princes, they must lay afterwards.

Concerning these two methods of rising to be a prince by ability or fortune, I wish to describe two examples within our own times. These are Francesco Sforza and Cesare Borgia. Francesco, by proper means and with great ability, from being a private person rose to be Duke of Milan, and that which he had acquired with a thousand anxieties he kept with little trouble. On the other hand, Cesare Borgia acquired his state while his father, Pope Alexander the Sixth, was in power. On his father's decline he lost it notwithstanding that he had taken every measure and done all that ought to be done by a wise and able man to firmly fix his roots in the states which the arms and fortunes of others had given to him.

He who has not first laid his foundations may be able with great ability to lay them afterwards, but they will be laid with trouble to the designer and danger to the building. If therefore, we look at all the steps taken by Cesare, it will be seen that he laid solid foundations for his future power. It is well worth looking at them, because I do not know what better advice to give a new prince than the example of his actions. If his planning failed, that was not his fault, but simply extraordinary bad luck.

Pope Alexander the Sixth, in wishing to promote Cesare, his son, had many immediate and prospective difficulties. Firstly, it seemed that the only available state would be one belonging to the Church. If he was willing to use a Church state he knew that the Duke of Milan and the Venetians would not consent. Besides this, he saw the armies of Italy, that might have assisted, him, were in the control of people who did not want to see the Church made more powerful by this move. It was necessary, therefore, to upset this state of affairs and create disorder among the powers, so as to make himself more securely master of part of their states. This was easy for him to do, because he found the Venetians, motivated by other reasons, inclined to bring back the French into Italy. He decided not to oppose this, but to assist it by helping King Louis officially end his former marriage. Therefore the King of France came into Italy with the assistance of the Venetians and the consent of Pope Alexander. He was no sooner in Milan than the Pope had soldiers from him for the attempt on the Romagna, which yielded to him simply from fear of the king. Cesare, therefore, having acquired the Romagna and beaten the Colonnese, while wishing to hold that and to advance further, was hindered by two things. Firstly, his forces did not appear loyal to him. Secondly, there was general good feeling towards France. That is to say, he feared that the forces of the Orsini, which he was using would not be loyal to him. They might not only hinder him from winning more, but might themselves seize what he had won, and the King of France might also do the same. He had a warning of the Orsini when after taking Faenza and attacking Bologna, he saw them go very unwillingly to that attack. He learned the mind of the king when he himself, after taking the Dukedom of

Urbino, attacked Tuscany and the king made him stop that undertaking. Hence Cesare decided not to depend upon the arms and the luck of others any more.

Firstly, he weakened the Orsini and Colonnese parties in Rome, by winning over all their followers who were gentlemen and making them his gentlemen, giving them good pay, and honouring them with official positions and power suited to their rank, so that in a few months all loyalty to the parties was destroyed and directed entirely to Cesare. After this he waited for an opportunity to crush the Orsini, having scattered the Colonnese supporters. This opportunity soon came to him and he used it well. The Orsini, perceiving eventually that the promotion of Cesare and the Church was ruin to them, called a meeting of the Magione in Perugia. From this came the rebellion at Urbino and the rebellions in the Romagna, with endless dangers to Cesare. However, he overcame these with the help of the French. Having restored his authority, he decided not to leave it at risk by relying either on the French or other outside forces. He thus decided to act more cleverly and to hide his intentions well. By the mediation of Signor Pagolo – whom Cesare secured with all kinds of attention, giving him money, clothes, and horses – the Orsini became more sympathetic, so that their simple trust brought them into his power. Having got rid of the leaders, and turned their supporters into his friends, and having all the Romagna and the Dukedom of Urbino, Cesare had laid sufficiently good foundations for his power,. Moreover, the people were now beginning to appreciate their improved living conditions, so they were happy to support him.

There is another important point to note. When Cesare occupied the Romagna he found it under the rule of weak masters, who robbed their subjects rather than ruled them, and gave them more cause for rebellion than for union. So the country was full of robbery, quarrels, and every kind of violence. So, wishing to bring back peace and obedience to authority, he considered it necessary to give it a good governor. Thus he promoted Ramiro d'Orco, an efficient and cruel man, to whom he gave the fullest power. This man in a short time restored peace and unity with great success. Afterwards Cesare considered that it was not a good idea to confer such excessive authority, for he had no doubt that he would become disliked. So he set up a court of judgment in the country, under an excellent president, in which all cities had their advocates. He knew that the past severity had caused some hatred against him. So, to clear himself in the minds of the people, and make them entirely loyal to him, he desired to show that, if any cruelty had been practised, it had not originated from him, but came from the personal cruelty of the governor. Under this pretence Cesare took Ramiro, and one morning had him killed and left in the square at Cesena with the block and a bloody knife at his side. This terrible sight caused the people to be at the same time satisfied and worried.

But let us return to where we started. Cesare now found himself sufficiently powerful and partly secured from immediate dangers by having armed himself in his own way, and having largely crushed those forces around him that could injure him. If he wished to proceed with his conquest, he next had to consider France. He knew that the king, who was now aware of his own misjudgements with Cesare would not support him. So from this time Cesare began to seek new friends and to delay helping France with the campaign which she was making towards the kingdom of Naples against the Spaniards who were attacking Gaeta. It was his intention to secure himself against them, and he would have quickly succeeded if his father, Pope Alexander, had lived.

Such was his line of action as to present affairs. But as to the future he had to fear, in the first place, that a new Pope might not be friendly to him and might seek to take from him that which his father, Pope Alexander, had given him. So Cesare decided to act in four ways. Firstly, by killing the families of those lords whom he had defeated, so that the new Pope could not use them as an excuse to attack him. Secondly, by winning the loyalty of all the gentlemen of Rome, so that they would not support the Pope.

Thirdly, by gaining the support of the college of cardinals. Fourthly, by acquiring so much power before Pope Alexander died that he could by his own means resist the first shock. He had completed three of these four things, at the death of Alexander. He had killed as many of the defeated lords as he could lay hands on, and few had escaped. He had won over the Roman gentlemen, and he controlled the largest group in the college of cardinals. And as to any fresh acquisition, he intended to become master of Tuscany, for he already possessed Perugia and Piombino, and Pisa was under his protection. As he no longer had to worry about France (for the French were already driven out of the kingdom of Naples by the Spaniards, and in this way both were forced to seek his support) he wanted to take Pisa. After this, Lucca and Siena would yield at once, partly through hatred and partly through fear of the Florentines. The Florentines would have had no remedy if he had continued to succeed, as he was succeeding the year that his father, Pope Alexander, died, because he would already have already acquired so much power and reputation that he would have stood by himself, and would no longer have depended on the luck and the forces of others, but solely on his own power and ability.

But Pope Alexander died five years after he had first drawn the sword. He left Cesare with the state of Romagna alone well secured, with the rest in the air, between two very powerful enemy armies, and in very ill health. Yet there was in Cesare such boldness and ability, and he knew so well how men are to be won or lost, and so firm were the foundations which in so short a time he had laid, that if he had not had those armies on his back, or if he had been in good health, he would have overcome all difficulties. And it is obvious that his foundations were good, because the Romagna waited for him for more than a month. In Rome, although barely half alive, he remained secure; and while the Baglioni, the Vitelli, and the Orsini might come to Rome, they could not carry out anything against him. If he could not choose the Pope he wanted, at least the one whom he did not want would not have been elected. But if he had been in good health at the death of Alexander, everything would have been different for him. On the day that Alexander's successor, Pope Julius the Second, was elected, he told me that he had thought of everything that might occur at the death of his father, and had provided a remedy for all of it, except that he had never anticipated that, when that death did happen, he himself would be on the point of dying.

When all the actions of Cesare are considered, I cannot criticise him, but rather it appears, as I have said, that I ought to hold him up as a model for all those who, by the fortune or the power of others, are placed in power. Cesare, having a noble spirit and far-reaching aims, could not have regulated his conduct otherwise. Only the shortness of the life of Alexander and his own sickness spoiled his plans. Therefore, anyone who considers it necessary to secure himself in his new principality, to win friends, to overcome either by force or deception, to make himself loved and feared by the people, to be followed and respected by the soldiers, to destroy those who have power or reason to hurt him, to change the old order of things for new, to be severe and still loved, generous and liberal, to destroy a disloyal army and to create a new one, to maintain friendship with kings and princes in such a way that they must help him with eagerness and offend with caution, cannot find a more lively example than the actions of this man.

He can only be criticised for the election of Pope Julius the Second, in whom he made a bad choice, because, as is said, not being able to elect the Pope of his own choice, he could have hindered any other from being elected Pope. He ought never to have consented to the election of any cardinal whom he had injured or who had cause to fear him if they became the Pope. Men injure others either from fear or from hatred. Cesare had injured several cardinals. The rest of them, in becoming Pope, would have feared him. Cesare ought to have created a Spaniard Pope, and failing that, he ought to have consented to a Pope who had depended on him and had a good relationship with him. He who believes that new benefits will cause great persons to forget old injuries is deceived. Therefore, Cesare was wrong in his choice, and it was the cause of his ultimate ruin.

CHAPTER 8

CONCERNING THOSE WHO HAVE OBTAINED A PRINCIPALITY BY WICKEDNESS

A prince can also rise from a private situation in two other ways, neither of which can be entirely attributed to fortune or genius. These methods are when by some wicked actions one gains the principality, or when by the favour of his fellow citizens a private person becomes the prince of his country. The first method, wickedness, will be illustrated by two examples – one ancient, the other modern – and without going further into the subject, I consider these two examples will be enough for those who may have to follow them.

Agathocles, the Sicilian, became King of Syracuse not only from being an ordinary citizen, but also from a low and humble position. This man, the son of a pot maker, through all the changes in his fortunes always led a wicked life. Nevertheless, he accompanied his wickedness with so much ability of mind and body that, having devoted himself to the military profession, he rose through its ranks to become leader of the army in Syracuse. Once he was established in that position, he resolved to make himself prince and to seize by violence, that which had already been willingly given to him. He came to an understanding for this purpose with Amilcar, the Carthaginian, who with his army, was fighting in Sicily. One morning he assembled the people and the senate of Syracuse, as if he had to discuss with them things relating to the Republic. At a given signal the soldiers killed all the senators and the richest of the people. He then seized and held the principedom of that city without any civil rebellion. And although he was twice defeated by the Carthaginians, and ultimately besieged, he was not only able to defend his city, but leaving part of his men for its defence, with the others he attacked the Carthaginians in Africa. In a short time the Carthaginians' were forced to stop their siege on Syracuse. The Carthaginians, reduced to extreme necessity, were forced to make peace with Agathocles, and, leaving Sicily to him, had to be content with the possession of Africa.

Anyone who considers the actions and the genius of this man will see nothing, or little, which can be attributed to fortune. He attained success, as is shown above, not by the favour of any one, but step by step in the military profession. This advancement was gained with a thousand troubles and dangers, and was afterwards boldly held by him in spite of many dangers. Yet it cannot be called "ability" to kill fellow citizens, to deceive friends, to be without faith, without mercy, without religion; such methods may gain empire, but not glory. Still, if the courage of Agathocles in entering into and removing himself from dangers is considered together with his greatness of mind in overcoming hardships, it seems that he should be admired as much as the most notable captain. Nevertheless, his terrible cruelty and infinite wickedness do not permit him to be ranked among the most excellent men. What he achieved however cannot be attributed to fortune.

In our times, during the rule of Alexander the Sixth, Oliverotto da Fermo, his parents having died many years before, was brought up by his uncle, Giovanni Fogliani. In the early days of his youth he was sent to fight under Pagolo Vitelli, so that, being trained under his discipline, he might attain some high position in the military profession. After Pagolo died, he fought under his brother Vitellozzo and in a very short time, being clever and capable, he became the leading man in his profession. But he did not like serving under others. So, he resolved, with the aid of some citizens of Fermo (to whom the slavery of their country was more important than its liberty) and with the help of the Vitelleschi, to seize Fermo. So he wrote to his uncle, Giovanni Fogliani, that, having been away from home for many years, he wished to

visit him and his city. He also wanted to look at what his parents had left him. He said that although he had not laboured to acquire anything except honour, he wanted the citizens of Fermo to see he had not spent his time in vain. Thus, he would be accompanied by one hundred of his soldiers, his friends and servants. He begged Giovanni to arrange for him to be received honourably by the Fermians, in recognition of not only his own achievements but also those of Giovanni himself, who had brought him up.

Giovanni, therefore, did his best for his nephew. Oliverotto was honourably received by the Fermians, and he stayed in his uncle's own house. After several days, and having arranged what was necessary for his wicked designs, Oliverotto gave a formal dinner to which he invited Giovanni Fogliani and the leaders of Fermo. When the food and all the other usual entertainment were finished, Oliverotto began to speak of serious matters, speaking of the greatness of Pope Alexander and his son Cesare. Giovanni and others replied to this speech, but Oliverotto rose at once, saying that such matters ought to be discussed in a more private place. He went into another room, and Giovanni and the rest of the citizens went in after him. No sooner were they seated than soldiers came out from secret places and killed Giovanni and the rest. After these murders Oliverotto rode up and down the town on horseback and besieged the governing council. The people were afraid and were forced to obey him, and to form a government with Oliverotto as the prince. He killed all those who were able to injure him, and strengthened himself with new civil and military laws, in such a way that, in the year during which he held the principality, not only was he secure in the city of Fermo, but he had become more powerful than all his neighbours. His destruction would have been as difficult as that of Agathocles if he had not allowed himself to be tricked by Cesare Borgia. One year after he had committed the murder of his uncle, he was killed.

Some may wonder how it can happen that Agathocles, and his like, after infinite wickedness and cruelties, should live securely for so long in his country, be able to defend himself from external enemies, and never have to deal with rebellion by his own citizens. Many others, by means of cruelty, have never been able even in peaceful times to hold the state, still less in the doubtful times of war. I believe that this follows from severe measures being badly or properly used. They are properly used (if it is possible to say that evil is proper) if they are applied at one blow, are necessary to one's security, and are not persisted in afterwards unless they can be turned to the advantage of the subjects. The severe measures are badly employed if although they are few in the commencement, multiply with time rather than decrease. Those who practise the first system are able, by the aid of God or man, in some degree to later soften their rule, as Agathocles did. It is impossible for those who continue to be cruel to maintain their control.

Hence, in seizing a state, the attacker ought to examine closely all those injuries which are necessary, and to do them all at one stroke so as not to have to repeat them daily. Thus by not continually upsetting the people, he will be able to make them feel more secure, and win them over by benefits. He who does otherwise, either from reluctance or evil advice, is always forced to keep the knife in his hand. He cannot rely on his subjects, and they cannot attach themselves to him, because of the continued and repeated wrongs. Injuries ought to be done all at one time, so that, being tasted less, they offend less. Benefits ought to be given little by little, so that their flavour may last longer.

Above all things, a prince ought to live amongst his people in such a way that no unexpected circumstances, whether of good or evil shall make him change. If the necessity for this comes in troubled times, you are too late for severe measures. Mild ones will not help you, because they will be considered as forced from you, and no one will feel grateful to you for them.

CHAPTER 9

CONCERNING A CONSTITUTIONAL PRINCIPALITY

But coming to the other point – where a leading citizen becomes the prince of his country, not by wickedness or violence but by the favour of his fellow citizens – this may be called a constitutional principality. Genius or fortune are not needed to attain to it, but rather a fortunate cleverness. Such a principality is obtained either by the favour of the people or by the favour of the nobles, because in all cities these two distinct parties are found. The people do not wish to be ruled or oppressed by the nobles, and the nobles wish to rule and oppress the people. From these two opposite desires there are three possible results, a principality, self government, or disorder.

A principality is created either by the people or by the nobles depending on who has the opportunity. The nobles, seeing they cannot overcome the people, begin to push one of their own people forward, and they make him a prince, so that under his shadow they can achieve their ambitions. The people finding they cannot resist the nobles, also cry up the reputation of one of themselves, and make him a prince so as to be defended by his authority. He who obtains the principality by the assistance of the nobles maintains himself with more difficulty than he who comes to it by the aid of the people. This is because the former finds himself with many around him who consider themselves his equals. Because of this, he can neither rule nor manage them to his liking. But he who gains the principality by popular favour finds himself alone, and has none around him, or few, who are not prepared to obey him.

Besides this, one cannot by fair dealing, and without injury to others, satisfy the nobles, but you can satisfy the people, for their goals are more proper than those of the nobles. The nobles wish to oppress, while the people only desire not to be oppressed. A prince can never secure himself against a hostile people, because they are too many. On the other hand, he can secure himself from the nobles, as they are few in number. The worst that a prince may expect from a hostile people is to be abandoned by them. However, from hostile nobles, he has not only to fear abandonment, but also that they will rise against him; for they, being in these affairs more far-seeing and clever, always come forward in time to save themselves, and to obtain favours from him whom they expect to win. Furthermore, the prince must always live with the same people, but he can do well without the same nobles. He can make and unmake them daily, and give or take away their authority whenever it pleases him.

Therefore, to make this point clearer, I say that the nobles ought to be looked at mainly in two ways: that is to say, they either shape their course in such a way as binds them entirely to your fortune, or they do not. Those who so bind themselves, and are not greedy ought to be respected and loved. Those who do not bind themselves may be dealt with in two ways. They may fail to do this through cowardice and a natural lack of courage. In this case you ought to make use of them, especially those who give good advice. Thus, while in good times you honour them, in difficult times you do not have to fear them. But when for their own ambitious ends they avoid binding themselves, it is a sign that they are giving more thought to themselves than to you. A prince ought to guard himself against such people, and ought to fear them as if they were open enemies, because in difficult times they always help to ruin him.

Therefore, one who becomes a prince through the favour of the people ought to keep them friendly. He can easily do this because they only ask not to be oppressed by him. But one who, without the support of the people, becomes a prince by the favour of the nobles, ought, above everything, to seek to win the people over to himself. He may easily do this if he takes them under his protection. Because men, when they receive good from him of whom they were expecting evil, are bound more closely to their protector.

Thus the people quickly become more devoted to him than if he had been raised to the principality through their support. The prince can win their support in many ways, but as these vary according to the circumstances one cannot give fixed rules and so I omit them. But, I repeat, it is necessary for a prince to have the people friendly, otherwise he has no security in difficult times.

Nabis, prince of the Spartans, defended his country and his government against the attack of all Greece and of a victorious Roman army. To overcome this danger, it was only necessary for him to make himself secure against a few, but this would not have been sufficient if the people had been hostile. And do not let any one attack this statement with the old saying that "He who builds on the people, builds on the mud." This saying is true when a private citizen makes a foundation there, and foolishly persuades himself that the people will free him when he is oppressed by his enemies. But if the leader is a prince who has established himself as a person who can command, and is a man of courage who does not fail in other qualifications, and who, by his resolution and energy, keeps all the people encouraged – such a one will never find himself abandoned by the people, and it will be shown that he has laid his foundations well.

These principalities are open to danger when they are passing from the constitutional to the absolute order of government, for such princes either rule personally or through councils. In the latter case their government is weaker and more insecure, because it rests entirely on the attitude of those citizens who are placed on the council, and who, especially in troubled times, can destroy the government with great ease, either by trickery or open rebellion. The prince does not have the chance in a rebellion to exercise absolute authority, because the citizens and subjects, accustomed to receiving orders from the council, are not willing to obey him when there is an unstable situation. Moreover, there will always be in doubtful times a scarcity of men whom he can trust. Such a prince cannot rely upon what he observes in quiet times, when citizens have need of the state, because then everyone agrees with him. They all promise to support him, and when death is far distant they all wish to die for him. But in troubled times, when the state has need of its citizens, then he finds only a few. Moreover this experiment of moving from a constitutional to an absolute government is dangerous, because it can only be tried once. Therefore a wise prince ought to adopt such a course that his citizens will always in all kinds of circumstances have need of the state and of him, and then he will always find them faithful.

CHAPTER 10

CONCERNING THE WAY IN WHICH THE STRENGTH OF ALL PRINCIPALITIES OUGHT TO BE MEASURED

It is necessary to consider another point in examining the character of these principalities: that is, whether a prince has such power that, in case of need, he can support himself with his own resources or whether he always has need of the assistance of others. To be more specific, I consider those who are able to support themselves by their own resources as those who can, either by having plenty of men or money, raise a sufficient army to join battle against any one who comes to attack them. I consider those always to have need of others as those who cannot show themselves against the enemy in the field, but are forced to defend themselves by sheltering behind walls. The first case has been discussed, but we will speak of it again should it come up. In the second case one can say nothing except to encourage such princes to provision and strengthen their towns, and not on any account try to defend the country. And whoever protects his town well, and has managed the other concerns of his subjects in the way stated above, will never be attacked without great caution. Men are not eager for actions where the difficulties can be clearly seen, and it will be seen to not be an easy thing to attack one who has his town well protected, and who is

not hated by his people.

The cities of Germany are absolutely free, they own little of the country around them, and they yield obedience to the king when it suits them. They do not fear this or any power they may have near them, because they are protected in such a way that every one thinks the taking of them by direct attack would be drawn out and difficult. They have proper ditches and walls, they have sufficient large guns and they always keep enough supplies in public store houses for one year's eating, drinking, and fighting. And beyond this, to keep the people quiet and without loss to the state, they always have the means of giving work to the community in those labours that are the life and strength of the city, and through the pursuit of which the people are supported. They also value military exercises, and moreover have many laws to support these exercises.

Therefore, a prince who has a strong city, and who has not made himself hated, will not be attacked. If any one does attack, he will only be driven off in defeat. Because the affairs of this world are so changeable, it is almost impossible to keep an army for a whole year in the field without being interfered with. And whoever should reply: "If the people have property outside the city, and see it burnt, they will not remain patient, and the long attack and self-interest will make them forget their prince". To this I answer that a powerful and courageous prince will overcome all such difficulties by giving at one time hope to his subjects that the evil will not be for long, and at another time encouraging fear of the cruelty of the enemy. At the same time he should deal appropriately with those subjects who seem to him to speak out too much.

Furthermore, the enemy would naturally immediately on their arrival burn and ruin the country at the time when the spirits of the people are still hot and ready for the defence. Therefore, so much the less should the prince hesitate; because after a time, when spirits have cooled, the damage is already done, and there is no longer any remedy. Thus the people are at that time much more ready to unite with their prince, because he appears to owe them a favour now that their houses have been burnt and their possessions ruined in his defence. This is because it is in the nature of men to be bound by the benefits they confer as much as by those they receive. Therefore, if everything is well considered, it will not be difficult for a wise prince to keep the minds of his citizens strong and loyal from first to last when he continues to support and defend them.

CHAPTER 11

CONCERNING CHURCH PRINCIPALITIES

It only remains now to speak of church principalities. All of the difficulties with them occur prior to getting possession because they are acquired either by capacity or good fortune, and they can be held without either; for they are sustained by the ancient laws of religion. These laws are so powerful, and of such character that the principalities may be held no matter how their princes behave and live. These princes alone have states and do not defend them. They have subjects and do not rule them. The states, although unguarded, are not taken from them. The subjects although not ruled, do not care, and they have neither the desire nor the ability to rebel. So only such principalities are secure and happy. But being supported by powers, to which the human mind cannot reach, I shall speak no more of them, because, being created and maintained by God, it would be the act of a proud and foolish man to discuss them.

Nevertheless, if any one should ask of me how it happens that the Church has attained such greatness in

earthly power, seeing that up to the time of Alexander, Italian leaders have not placed much value on the Church's earthly power – yet now a king of France trembles before it, and it has been able to drive him from Italy, and to ruin the Venetians – although this may be very obvious, it seems worthwhile to describe it again.

Before Charles, King of France, came into Italy, this country was under the control of the Pope, the Venetians, the King of Naples, the Duke of Milan, and the Florentines. These leaders had two principal anxieties: the first, that no foreign army should enter Italy, and the second, that none of themselves should seize others' lands. Those about whom there was the most anxiety were the Pope and the Venetians. To restrain the Venetians the union of all the others was necessary as it was for the defence of Ferrara. To keep down the Pope they made use of the barons of Rome. They consisted of two groups, the Orsini and Colonnese, who always had a reason for disorder, and, standing with weapons in their hands under the eyes of the Pope, kept the Pope weak and powerless. And although there might sometimes be a courageous Pope, yet neither fortune nor wisdom could rid him of these problems. In addition, the short life of a Pope is also a cause of weakness, because in the ten years which is the average life of a Pope, he can with difficulty reduce the power of only one of the groups. And if, for example, the Colonnese were almost destroyed, another group would arise hostile to the Orsini, who would support the Colonnese, but they would not have time to ruin the Orsini. This was the reason why the earthly powers of the Church were not highly regarded in Italy.

This however was not so in the time of Pope Alexander the Sixth. Of all the Popes that have ever been, he showed how a Pope with both money and military power was able to succeed. With the help of his son, Cesare Borgia, and by reason of the entry of the French into Italy, he brought about all those things which I have discussed above in the actions of Cesare. And although his intention was not to benefit the Church, nevertheless, what Pope Alexander did contributed to the greatness of the Church, which, after his death and the ruin of Cesare, gained the benefit of all his labours.

Pope Julius came soon after Pope Alexander and found the Church strong, possessing all the Romagna, the barons of Rome made powerless, and, through the efforts of Alexander, the Colonnese and Orsini groups weakened. He also found the way open to accumulate money in a manner such as had never been practised before Alexander's time. Such things Julius not only followed, but improved upon. He also intended to gain Bologna, to ruin the Venetians, and to drive the French out of Italy. He achieved all of these goals, and, even more to his credit, he did everything to strengthen the Church and not any private individual. He kept also the Orsini and Colonnese groups within the bounds in which he found them. Although some among them wanted to make trouble, nevertheless he held two things firm - first, the greatness of the Church, with which he frightened them and the other, not allowing them to have their own cardinals, who could cause disorder among them. Whenever these groups have their own cardinals they do not remain quiet for long. Cardinals encourage the groups like the Orsini in Rome and the barons are forced to support them,. Thus from the ambitions of cardinals arise disorders and rebellion among the barons. For these reasons his Holiness Pope Leo was most powerful, and it is to be hoped that, if others made the Church great in arms, he will make it still greater and more respected by his goodness and infinite other virtues.

CHAPTER 12

HOW MANY KINDS OF SOLDIERS THERE ARE, AND CONCERNING MERCENARIES

I have described the characteristics of the various principalities that I proposed to discuss, and I have

considered in some degree the causes of their being good or bad. I have also shown the methods by which many have sought to acquire principalities and to hold them. It now remains for me to discuss generally the means of attack and defence which go with each of them.

We have seen above how necessary it is for a prince to have his foundations well laid, otherwise it follows of necessity he will go to ruin. The chief foundations of all states, new as well as old or mixed, are good laws and good arms. As there cannot be good laws where the state is not well armed, it follows that where they are well armed they have good laws. I shall leave the laws out of the discussion and shall speak of the arms.

The arms with which a prince defends his state are either his own, or they are mercenaries, auxiliaries, or mixed. Mercenaries and auxiliaries are useless and dangerous. If a prince holds his state based on these arms, he will stand neither firm nor safe, because they are ambitious, not united, without discipline, unfaithful, brave in front of friends and cowardly before enemies. They have neither fear of God nor loyalty to men. Destruction caused by them is put off only as long as the attack lasts. In peace one is robbed by them, and in war by the enemy. The fact is, they have no other attraction or reason for staying in battle than a small amount of pay which is not sufficient to make them willing to die for you. They are ready enough to be your soldiers while you do not make war, but if war comes they disappear or run from the enemy. I will have no trouble in proving this, because the ruin of Italy has been caused by nothing else than by resting all her hopes for many years on mercenaries. Although they formerly made some display and appeared brave amongst themselves, yet when the foreigners came they showed what they really were. Thus it was that Charles, King of France, was allowed to seize Italy without a show of resistance. Whoever told us that our weaknesses were the cause of it told the truth. But they were not the weaknesses he imagined, but those which I have described. And as they were the weaknesses of princes, it is the princes who have also suffered the result.

I wish to demonstrate further the danger of these soldiers. The mercenary captains are either capable men or they are not. If they are, you cannot trust them, because they always want to become more powerful, either by oppressing you, who are their master, or others contrary to your intentions. If the mercenary captain is not skilful, you are ruined in the usual way.

If it is argued that any soldiers will act in the same way whether mercenary or not, I reply that when arms must be used, they are under the control of a prince or a republic. The prince ought to go in person and perform the duty of a captain. The republic has to send its citizens, and when one is sent who does not turn out satisfactorily it ought to send him back. When one is a worthy captain, it ought to hold on to him by the laws so that he does not leave the command. Experience has shown princes and republics, single-handed, make the greatest progress and mercenaries do nothing except damage. It is more difficult for a republic armed with its own arms to be taken over by one of its citizens, than it is to take over one armed with foreign arms. Rome and Sparta stood for many ages armed and free. The Swiss are completely armed and quite free.

Of ancient mercenaries, for example, there are the Carthaginians, who were oppressed by their mercenary soldiers after the first war with the Romans, although the Carthaginians had their own citizens for captains. After the death of Epaminondas, Philip of Macedon was made captain of their soldiers by the Thebans, and after victory he took away their liberty.

Duke Filippo being dead, the Milanese hired Francesco Sforza to fight against the Venetians, and he, having overcome the enemy at Caravaggio, joined with the Venetians to crush the Milanese, his masters. His father, Sforza, having been hired by Queen Johanna of Naples, left her unprotected, so that she was

forced to throw herself into the arms of the King of Aragon, in order to save her kingdom. On the other hand, the Venetians and Florentines formerly extended their possessions by using mercenaries, and yet their captains did not make themselves princes, but have defended them. I consider however that the Florentines in this case have been lucky, because of the able captains, of whom they might have stood in fear, some have not conquered, some have been successfully opposed, and others have turned their ambitions elsewhere. One who did not conquer was Giovanni Acuto, and since he did not conquer his loyalty cannot be proved. However, everyone will acknowledge that, if he had conquered, the Florentines would have been in his power. Sforza always had the Bracceschi against him, so they watched each other. Francesco turned his ambition to Lombardy; Braccio against the Church and the kingdom of Naples. But let us come to that which happened a short while ago. The Florentines appointed as their captain Pagolo Vitelli, a very careful man, who from a private position had risen to become very famous. If this man had taken Pisa, nobody can deny that it would have been proper for the Florentines to keep on good terms with him, because if he became the soldier of their enemies, they had no means of resisting, and if they stayed friendly with him, they would have to obey him. The Venetians, if their achievements are considered, will be seen to have acted safely and successfully, as long as they sent their own men to war, when with their own armed gentlemen and citizens they did very well. This was before they turned to fighting on land, but when they began to fight on land they gave up this virtue and followed the custom of Italy. In the beginning of their expansion on land, by not having much land to control, and because of their great reputation, they did not have much to fear from their captains. But when they expanded, they had a taste of this mistake of hiring mercenaries. Having found him a very brave man (they beat the Duke of Milan under his leadership), and, on the other hand, knowing how unenthusiastic he was in the war, they feared they would no longer conquer under him. For this reason they were not willing, nor were they able, to let him go. So, in order not to lose what they had acquired again, they were forced to murder him, in order to secure themselves. Afterwards they had Bartolomeo da Bergamo, Roberto da San Severino, the count of Pitigliano, and the like, for their captains under whom they had to fear loss and not gain. This happened afterwards at Vaila, where in one battle they lost that which in eight hundred years they had acquired with so much trouble. From such mercenaries conquests come slowly, are long delayed and are not very significant. The losses however are sudden and very great.

Because with these examples I have reached Italy, which has been ruled for many years by mercenaries, I wish to discuss them in depth in order that, having seen their rise and progress, one may be better prepared to stand against them. You must understand that the empire has recently been destroyed in Italy, that the Pope has acquired more earthly power, and that Italy has been divided up into more states. The reasons are that many of the great cities took up arms against their nobles, who, formerly supported by the emperor, were oppressing them. The Church was supporting the rebellions so as to gain earthly authority. In many others, their citizens became princes. Thus Italy fell partly into the hands of the Church and of the republics. The Church consisted of priests and the republic consisted of citizens who were not soldiers, so both commenced hiring foreigners as mercenaries.

The first who made mercenaries well known was Alberigo da Conio, from the Romagna. From the school of this man came, among others Braccio and Sforza, who in their time were the masters of Italy. After these came all the other captains who till now have directed the military of Italy. The outcome of all their bravery has been, that Italy has been invaded by Charles, robbed by Louis, exploited by Ferdinand, and insulted by the Swiss. The principle that has guided the mercenaries has been first, to lower the credit of foot soldiers so that they might increase their own status. They did this because they did not have their own lands to give them income and so had to survive on their pay. They were thus unable to support many soldiers. Moreover, having foot soldiers did not give them any authority, so they were led to employ horse soldiers. In this way, with a moderate force they could maintain themselves with some

status. However, this meant that in an army of twenty thousand soldiers, there were not even two thousand foot soldiers. Besides this, they used every trick to reduce their own involvement and the danger to themselves and their soldiers. These tricks included not killing in the battle, but taking prisoners and liberating without getting money in return. They did not attack towns at night, nor did the soldiers in the towns attack camps at night. They did not surround their own camps either with a wall or a ditch, nor did they fight in the winter. All these things were permitted by their military rules, and were created by them to avoid, as I have said, both effort and danger. Thus they have diminished Italy's reputation and have brought it into slavery.

CHAPTER 13

CONCERNING AUXILIARIES, MIXED ARMIES, AND ONE'S OWN SOLDIERS

Auxiliaries, which are the other kind of most useless soldiers, are employed when a prince calls in other forces to aid and defend him, as was done by Pope Julius in most recent times. Pope Julius, having, in the attack against Ferrara, had poor results from his mercenaries, turned to auxiliaries, and bargained with Ferdinand, King of Spain, for his assistance with men and soldiers. These soldiers may be useful and good in themselves, but for the person who calls them in they are always disadvantageous, because by losing, a prince is thoroughly defeated, and by winning, a prince becomes under their control.

Although ancient histories may be full of examples, I do not wish to leave this recent one of Pope Julius the Second, the danger of which cannot fail to be perceived. Pope Julius, wishing to get Ferrara, threw himself entirely into the hands of foreigners. But his good fortune brought about a third event, so that he did not suffer the effects of his bad choice. His auxiliaries were thoroughly defeated at Ravenna, and the Swiss unexpectedly arrived and drove the conquerors away. Thus he did not become the prisoner of his enemies, they having been driven away, nor of his auxiliaries, he having conquered by other arms than theirs.

The Florentines, being entirely without arms, sent ten thousand Frenchmen to take Pisa, whereby they ran into more danger than at any other time of their troubles.

The Emperor of Constantinople sent ten thousand Turks into Greece, to oppose his neighbours. When the war was finished, the Turks were not willing to leave. This was the beginning of the slavery of Greece to outsiders.

Therefore, let him who has no desire to conquer make use of auxiliaries, because they are much more dangerous than mercenaries. With them the failure is ready made. They are all united, and all yield obedience to others. But with mercenaries, when they have conquered, more time and better opportunities are needed to injure you. They are not all of one community, they are found and paid by you, and a third party which you have made their head, is not able all at once to assume enough authority to injure you. In conclusion, in mercenaries cowardice is the biggest danger; in auxiliaries, courage. The wise prince, therefore has always avoided these types of soldiers and used his own. He has been willing to lose with his own soldiers rather than to conquer with others. A real victory is not gained with the arms of others.

I shall never hesitate to cite Cesare Borgia and his actions. Cesare entered the Romagna with auxiliaries, taking there only French soldiers, and with them he took Imola and Forli. But afterwards such auxiliary forces not appearing to him to be reliable, he turned to mercenaries seeing less danger in them. So, he

hired the Orsini and Vitelli. Soon after when he found them unreliable, unfaithful, and dangerous, he destroyed them and used his own men. The difference between one and the other of these forces can be easily seen when one considers the difference there was in the reputation of Cesare, when he had the French, when he had the Orsini and Vitelli, and when he relied on his own soldiers, on whose loyalty he could always count and found ever increasing. He was rated much more highly when everyone saw that he was complete master of his own forces.

I was not intending to go beyond Italian examples and recent examples, but I am unwilling to leave out Hiero, the Syracusan, who I have mentioned before. This man, as I have said, who was made head of the army by the Syracusans, soon found out that a mercenary army was of no use. He realised that he could neither keep them nor let them go, so he had them all cut to pieces, and afterwards made war using his own forces and not foreigners.

I also wish to mention an instance from the Bible which is applicable to this subject. David offered himself to Saul to fight Goliath. To give him courage, Saul armed him with some weapons, which David rejected as soon as he had them on his back. He said he could make no use of them, and that he wished to meet the enemy with his own simple weapons. In conclusion, the arms of others either fall from your back, or they weigh you down or bind you fast.

Charles the Seventh, the father of King Louis the Eleventh, having by good fortune and bravery liberated France from the English recognized the necessity of being armed with forces of his own. In his kingdom he established laws concerning soldiers. Afterwards his son, King Louis, got rid of his own the foot soldiers and began to hire the Swiss. This mistake, followed by others, is as is now seen, a source of danger to that kingdom. Having raised the reputation of the Swiss, he has entirely diminished the value of his own army, because he has none of his own foot soldiers at all, and his other soldiers are led by the Swiss. They are so accustomed to fighting beside the Swiss that it does not appear that they can now conquer without them. Hence the French cannot stand against the Swiss, and without the Swiss they do not come off well against others. The armies of the French have thus become mixed, partly mercenary and partly national. These together are much better than mercenaries alone or auxiliaries alone, but are much worse than one's own forces. And this example proves it, for the kingdom of France would be much stronger if the laws of Charles had been strengthened or maintained.

Most people, on beginning a task which looks fine at first, cannot see the poison that is hidden in it. Therefore, if a prince cannot recognize evils until they are upon him, he is not truly wise; and this insight is given to few. If the fall of the Roman Empire is examined, it will be found to have commenced with the hiring of the Goths. From that time the strength of the Roman Empire began to decline, and all that courage which had raised it passed away to others.

I conclude, therefore, that no principality is secure without having its own forces; in fact it is entirely dependent on good fortune, not having the courage which in bad times would defend it. It has always been the opinion and judgment of wise men that nothing can be so uncertain or unstable as reputation or power not founded on its own strength. One's own forces are those which are composed either of subjects, citizens, or dependents - all others are mercenaries or auxiliaries. The way to make one's own forces ready will be easily found if the rules I have suggested are carefully considered, and if one will consider how Philip, the father of Alexander the Great, and many republics and princes have armed and organized themselves.

CHAPTER 14

THAT WHICH CONCERNS A PRINCE ON THE SUBJECT OF THE ART OF WAR

A prince ought to have no other aim or thought, nor select anything else for his study, than war and its rules and discipline. This is the sole art that belongs to him who rules, and it is of such force that it not only supports those who are born princes, but it often enables men to rise from a private station to that rank. It is often seen that when princes have thought more of ease than of arms they have lost their states, and the first cause of losing it is to neglect this art. What enables a prince to acquire a state is to be master of the art. Francesco Sforza, through studying war, rose from being a private citizen to become Duke of Milan, and his sons through avoiding the hardships and troubles of arms, fell from being dukes to become private citizens. For among other evils which being unarmed brings you, it causes you to be despised. This is one of those dangers which a prince ought to guard against. There is a big difference between being armed and being unarmed, and it is not reasonable that an armed person should willingly obey an unarmed person. An unarmed man will not be secure among armed servants, because by being unarmed he will be suspicious of them and they will despise him. So, it is not possible for them to work well together. Therefore a prince who does not understand the art of war, over and above the other disadvantages already mentioned, cannot be respected by his soldiers, nor can he rely on them. He ought never, therefore, to have this subject of war out of his thoughts, and in peace he should devote himself more to its exercise than in times of war. He can do this in two ways, by action, and by study. As regards action, he ought above all things to keep his men well trained and organized, and to carry out extended exercises in the field, by which he accustoms his body to hardships, and learns something of the nature of the land. He gets to find out how the mountains rise, how the valleys open out, how the plains lie, and to understand the nature of rivers and wet areas, and to do all this with careful planning and analysis. This knowledge is useful in two ways. Firstly, he learns to know his country, and is better able to undertake its defence. Afterwards, by means of the knowledge and observation of that land, he can easily understand any other which it may be necessary for him to study, because the hills, valleys, and plains, and rivers that are, for instance, in Tuscany, have a certain similarity to those of other countries. So, with a knowledge of the aspect of one country, one can easily arrive at a knowledge of others. The prince that lacks this skill lacks the essentials which it is desirable that a military leader should possess. It teaches him to surprise his enemy, to select places to camp, to lead armies, to organise the soldiers in a battle, and to besiege towns in the best way.

Philopoemen, prince of the Achaeans, among other praises which writers have heaped on him, is especially praised because in times of peace he never had anything in his mind but the rules of war. When he was in the country with friends, he often stopped and reasoned with them "If the enemy were on that hill, and we were here with our army, who would have the advantage? How should we best advance to meet the enemy, without breaking ranks? If we should wish to go back, how could we do it? If they ran, how ought we pursue them?" And he would suggest to them, as he went, all the things that could happen to an army. He would listen to their opinion and state his, confirming it with reasons, so that by these continual discussions there could never arise, in time of war, any unexpected circumstances that he could not deal with.

But to exercise his mind, the prince should read histories, and study there the actions of great men, to see how they have conducted themselves in war, to examine the causes of their victories and defeats, so as to avoid the latter and imitate the former. Above all a prince should do as great men did, to take as a model one who had been praised and famous before them, and whose achievements and deeds they always kept in mind. Thus, it is said Alexander the Great imitated Achilles, Caesar imitated Alexander, and Scipio

imitated Cyrus. Whoever reads the life of Cyrus, written by Xenophon, will recognize afterwards in the life of Scipio how that imitation was his glory, and how in his behaviour, friendliness, kindness, and generosity Scipio conformed to those things which have been written of Cyrus by Xenophon. A wise prince ought to observe such rules, and never in peaceful times stand idle. He should actively increase his resources in such a way that they may be available to him in difficult times, so that if fortune changes, it will find him prepared to resist her blows.

CHAPTER 15

CONCERNING THINGS FOR WHICH MEN, AND ESPECIALLY PRINCES ARE PRAISED OR BLAMED

It remains now to see what ought to be the rules of conduct for a prince towards subjects and friends. And as I know that many have written on this point, I expect I shall be considered too bold in mentioning it again, especially as in discussing it I shall not follow the methods of other people. But, it being my intention to write something which shall be useful to him who reads it, it appears to me more appropriate to follow up the real truth of the matter than the imagination of it. Many have imagined republics and principalities which in fact have never been known or seen. How one actually lives is far distant from how one ought to live. Anyone who neglects what is done for what ought to be done, sooner brings about his ruin rather than his preservation. A man who wishes to act entirely in a virtuous way is soon destroyed among so much that is evil in the world.

Hence a prince who wishes to survive must know how to do wrong, and how to do or not do wrong according to necessity. Therefore, putting on one side imaginary things concerning a prince and discussing those which are real, I say that all men when they are spoken of, and chiefly princes for being more highly placed, are remarkable for some of those qualities which bring them either blame or praise. Thus one has the reputation of being liberal, another mean. One is said to be generous, one greedy; one cruel, one kind; one disloyal another faithful; one weak and cowardly, another bold and brave; one friendly, another proud; one pleasure loving, another restrained; one sincere, another not truthful; one hard, another easy; one serious, another foolish; one religious, another unbelieving, and the like. And I know that everyone will confess that it would be most worthy in a prince to exhibit all the above qualities that are considered good. But, because they can neither be entirely possessed nor observed in any one person, for human conditions do not permit it, it is necessary for him to be sufficiently careful so that he may know how to avoid the criticism of those things considered bad which would lose him his state. Also, he should avoid, if it is possible, bad behaviour which would not lose him his state, but, if this is not possible, he may with less hesitation do it. Moreover, he need not feel uneasy about being criticised for that bad behaviour which is necessary to maintain the state, because if everything is considered carefully, it will be found that something which looks like virtue, if followed would be his ruin; while something else, which looks wrong, may bring him security and wealth.

CHAPTER 16

CONCERNING GENEROSITY AND MEANNESS

Commencing then with the first of the characteristics mentioned above, it would be nice to have the reputation of being generous. Nevertheless generosity exercised in a way that does not bring you the

reputation for it, injures you. If one shows generosity honestly and as it should be shown, it may not become known, and you will not avoid the criticism of its opposite, meanness. Therefore, anyone wishing to maintain the reputation of being generous has to keep on being more and more generous. As a result a prince thus inclined will consume all his property in such acts. In the end, he will have to unnecessarily exploit his people, and tax them, and do everything he can to get money. This will soon make him disliked by his subjects, and becoming poor he will be little valued by anyone. Thus, with his generosity, having offended many and rewarded few, he is affected by the very first trouble. Recognizing this himself, and wishing to draw back from it, he runs at once into the criticism of being mean.

Therefore, a prince, not being able to exercise this virtue of generosity in such a way that it is recognized, except to his cost, if he is wise, ought not to fear the reputation of being mean. In time he will come to be highly regarded, seeing that with his economy his revenues are enough, that he can defend himself against all attacks, and is able to carry out projects without placing a heavy load on his people. Thus he exercises generosity towards all from whom he does not take, who are many, and meanness towards those to whom he does not give, who are few.

We have not seen great things done in our time except by those who have been considered mean; the rest have failed. Pope Julius the Second was assisted in becoming Pope by a reputation for generosity. However, he did not try to keep it up afterwards, when he made war on the King of France. He made many wars without imposing any extraordinary tax on his subjects, for he supplied his additional expenses out of his continued care with money. The present King of Spain would not have undertaken or conquered in so many difficult adventures if he had been considered generous. A prince, therefore, provided that he does not have to rob his subjects, can defend himself, does not become poor and despised, and is not forced to exploit the people, ought not to worry about having a reputation for being mean, because it is one of those bad characteristics which will enable him to govern.

And if any one should say: Caesar obtained an empire by generosity, and many others have reached the highest positions by having been generous and by being considered so, I answer: Either you are a prince in fact or on the way to becoming one. In the first case this generosity is dangerous. In the second case, it is very necessary to be considered generous; and Caesar was one of those who wished to become powerful in Rome. But if he had survived after becoming so, and had not controlled his expenses, he would have destroyed his government. And if anyone should reply: Many have been princes, and have done great things with armies, who have been considered very generous, I reply Either a prince spends that which is his own or his subjects' or else that of others. In the first case he ought to be careful, in the second he ought not to neglect any opportunity for generosity. And to the prince who goes forth with his army, supporting it by taking what he finds around him, handling that which belongs to others, this generosity is necessary, otherwise he would not be followed by soldiers. You can be a ready giver of that which is neither yours nor your subjects', as were Cyrus, Caesar, and Alexander, because it does not take away your reputation if you waste what belonged to others, but adds to it. It is only wasting your own possessions that injures you.

Nothing disappears so rapidly as generosity. Even while you exercise it, you lose the power to do so, and so become either poor or despised, or else, in avoiding poverty, you exploit the people and become hated. A prince should guard himself, above all things, against being despised and hated. Generosity leads you to both. Therefore it is wiser to have a reputation for meanness which brings criticism without hatred than to be forced through seeking a reputation for generosity to get a reputation for exploiting people which causes criticism with hatred.

CHAPTER 17

CONCERNING CRUELTY AND KINDNESS, AND WHETHER IT IS BETTER TO BE LOVED THAN FEARED

Coming now to the other qualities mentioned above, every prince ought to desire to be considered kind and not cruel. Nevertheless he ought to take care not to misuse this kindness. Cesare Borgia was considered cruel, but notwithstanding, his cruelty calmed the Romagna, unified it, and restored it to peace and loyalty. And if this is carefully considered, he will be seen to have been much more merciful than the Florentine people, who, to avoid a reputation for cruelty, permitted Pistoia to be destroyed. Therefore a prince, so long as he keeps his subjects united and loyal, ought not to mind the criticism of cruelty. By making an example of a few people, he will be more merciful than those who, through too much mercy, allow rebellions to arise, from which follow murders or robberies. These are likely to injure the whole people, while those killings which are commanded by the prince only affect the individual.

And of all princes, it is impossible for the new prince to avoid the reputation for cruelty. This is because new states are full of dangers.

Nevertheless a prince ought to be slow to believe and to act, and should not show fear. He should proceed in a calm manner with care and concern for others, so that too much confidence does not make him careless and too much distrust does not make him always suspicious.

Related to this a question arises: whether it be better to be loved than feared or feared than loved? It may be answered that one should wish to be both, but, because it is difficult to unite them in one person it is much safer to be feared than loved, when only one is possible. The reason for this is that in general men are ungrateful, inconstant, false, cowardly, and greedy. As long as you succeed, they are yours entirely - they will offer you their blood, property, life, and children, when the need is far distant. But when the need approaches, they turn against you. A prince who, relying entirely on their promises, has neglected other ways of protecting himself, will be ruined. Friendships that are obtained by payments, and not by greatness or nobility of mind, may indeed be earned, but they are not secured, and in time of need cannot be relied upon. Men are less worried about offending one who is loved than one who is feared. Love is preserved by the link of gratefulness which, owing to the weak nature of men, is broken at every opportunity for their advantage; but fear preserves you by a fear of punishment which never fails.

Nevertheless a prince ought to encourage fear in such a way that, if he does not win love, he avoids hatred. He can carry on very well being feared while he is not hated, which will always be as long as he keeps away from the property of his citizens and subjects and from their women. But when it is necessary for him to proceed against the life of someone, he must do it with proper justification and for obvious reasons. But above all things he must keep his hands off the property of others, because men more quickly forget the death of their father than the loss of their inheritance. Besides, it is always easy to create reasons for taking away property. Anyone who has once begun to live by robbery will always find reasons for seizing what belongs to others. But reasons for taking life, on the other hand, are more difficult to find and are hard to keep justifying. But when a prince is with his army, and has hundreds of soldiers under his command, then it is necessary for him to not worry about having a reputation for cruelty, because without it he will not keep his army united or disposed to do its duties.

Among the wonderful deeds of Hannibal this one is described: that having led an enormous army,

composed of various races of men, to fight in foreign lands, no disagreements arose either among them or against the prince, no matter whether things were going badly or well. This arose from nothing else than his inhuman cruelty, which, with his boundless courage, made him respected and terrible in the sight of his soldiers. Without that cruelty, his other virtues were not sufficient to produce this effect. Short-sighted writers admire his deeds from one point of view and from another criticise the principal cause of them. Evidence for this can be seen in the case of Scipio, that most excellent man, not only of his own times but within the memory of man, against whom, nevertheless, his army rebelled in Spain. This arose from nothing but his too great kindness, which gave his soldiers more freedom than is consistent with military discipline. For this he was criticised in the Senate by Fabius Maximus, and called a bad leader. Also because of his easy nature he did not punish one of his officers who exploited the Locrians. Someone in the Senate, wishing to excuse him, said there were many men who knew much better how not to make errors than to correct the errors of others. This kindness as a commander would have eventually destroyed Scipio's reputation and glory. Fortunately, he was under the control of the Senate, so this dangerous characteristic not only remained hidden, but contributed to his glory.

Returning to the question of being feared or loved, I come to the conclusion that, because men love according to their own will and fear according to the will of the prince, a wise prince should establish himself on that which is in his own control and not in the control of others. He must try however to avoid hatred.

CHAPTER 18

CONCERNING THE WAY IN WHICH PRINCES SHOULD KEEP FAITH

Everyone admits how good it is in a prince to keep faith, and to live with integrity and not with trickery. Nevertheless our experience has been that those princes who have done great things have held good faith of little account, and have known how to get their way through cheating. In the end they have overcome those who have relied on their word. You must know there are two ways of winning, one by the rules, and the other by force. The first method is suited to men, the second to beasts. But because the first is frequently not sufficient, it is necessary to use the second. Therefore it is necessary for a prince to understand how to use the ways of both the beast and the man. This has been taught by example to princes by ancient writers, who describe how Achilles and many other princes of old were given to Chiron, who was half horse and half man, to nurse who brought them up in his discipline. This means that they had for a teacher one who was half beast and half human. So, it is necessary for a prince to know how to make use of both natures, and that one without the other is not sufficient. A prince, therefore, being forced knowingly to adopt the beast, ought to choose the fox and the lion; because the lion cannot defend himself against traps and the fox cannot defend himself against wolves. Therefore, it is necessary to be a fox to discover the traps and a lion to frighten the wolves. Those who rely simply on the lion do not understand what they are doing. Therefore a wise lord cannot, nor ought he, keep faith when such promises may be turned against him, and when the reasons that caused him to promise no longer exist. If men were entirely good this principle would not hold, but because they are bad, and will not keep faith with you, you too are not bound to observe it with them. There will never be a shortage of good reasons to excuse going back on your word. Endless modern examples of this could be given, showing how many agreements have been broken by princes, and how he who has known best how to employ the fox has succeeded best.

But it is necessary to know how to hide this characteristic well and to be a great pretender. People are so simple, and so subject to present necessities, that anyone who seeks to deceive will always find someone

who will allow himself to be deceived. One recent example I cannot pass over in silence. Pope Alexander the Sixth did nothing else but deceive men, nor ever thought of doing otherwise. He always found people to fool, because there never was a man who could so convincingly say something was true and promise something, and yet be so unlikely to do it. Nevertheless his lies always succeeded according to his wishes, because he understood this side of mankind very well.

Therefore it is unnecessary for a prince to have all the good qualities I have described, but it is very necessary to appear to have them. And I shall dare to say this also, that to have these qualities and always to observe them is dangerous, and that to appear to have them is useful. A prince should appear merciful, faithful, kind, religious, upright, but should be flexible enough to make use of the opposite qualities when it is necessary.

And you have to understand this, that a prince, especially a new one cannot do all those things for which men are praised, being often forced, in order to maintain the state, to act contrary to honesty, friendship, kindness, and religion. Therefore it is necessary for him to have a mind ready to turn itself accordingly as the winds and variations of fortune force it. Yet, as I have said above, a prince should not turn away from the good if he can avoid doing so, but, if it is truly necessary, then he should know how to set about it.

For this reason a prince ought to take care that he never lets anything slip from his lips that is not full of the five qualities mentioned above, so that he may appear to everyone who sees and hears him completely merciful, faithful, kind, upright, and religious. There is nothing more necessary to appear to have than this last quality. Men judge generally more by the eye than by the hand, because everybody can see you, but few come in touch with you. Everyone sees what you appear to be, but few really know what you are, and those few dare not oppose the opinion of the many, who have the power of the state to defend them. In the actions of all men, and especially of princes, which it is not wise to challenge, one judges by the result.

For that reason, let a prince have the credit for conquering and holding his state, the means will always be considered honest, and he will be praised by everybody. This is because the common people are always influenced by what a thing seems to be and by what results from it. In this world only the common people matter when their minds are firmly made up.

One prince of the present time, whom it is not wise to name, never preaches anything else but peace and good faith, and yet to both he is most opposed. If he had followed what he preached, he would have lost his reputation and kingdom many a time.

CHAPTER 19

THAT ONE SHOULD AVOID BEING HATED AND DESPISED

I have spoken of the most important characteristics a prince should have, and now I wish to discuss the others briefly under the general theme that the prince must consider how to avoid those things which will make him hated or despised. If he can succeed with this, he will have done the best he can, and he need not fear any danger in other criticisms.

It makes him hated above all things, as I have said, to be greedy and to exploit the property and women of his subjects, and he must avoid doing this. And when neither their property nor their honour is threatened,

the majority of men live happily, and the prince has only to deal with the ambition of a few, whom he can easily control in many ways.

A prince is despised if he is considered changeable, foolish, weak, mean, and uncertain. A prince should avoid these characteristics. In his actions he should try to show greatness, courage, seriousness, and strength. In his private dealings with his subjects he should show that his judgments must be followed, and he should maintain himself with such a reputation that no one can hope either to deceive him or to get round him.

A prince who shows these good qualities will be highly respected, and such a person can only be attacked with difficulty. For this reason a prince ought to have two fears, one from within, on account of his subjects, the other from without, on account of external powers. From the latter he is defended by being well armed and having good friends, and if he is well armed he will have good friends. Affairs will always remain quiet within, when they are quiet outside, unless they have been already disturbed by conspiracy; and even if affairs outside are disturbed, if he has carried out his preparations and has lived as I have said, as long as he does not despair, he will resist every attack.

But concerning his subjects, when affairs outside are disturbed, he only has to fear that his subjects will conspire secretly. A prince can easily secure himself from this by avoiding being hated and despised, and by keeping the people satisfied with him. It is extremely important for him to do this, as I have said above at length. And one of the most effective remedies that a prince can have against conspiracies is not to be hated and despised by the people. Any conspirator always expects to please the people by the prince's removal. But when the conspirator can only look forward to offending them, he will not have the courage to take such a course, because the difficulties that face a conspirator are infinite. As experience shows, there have been many conspiracies, but few have been successful. A conspirator cannot act alone, nor can he take a companion except from those whom he believes to be dissatisfied. As soon as you have opened your mind to a dissatisfied person, you have given him the material with which to satisfy himself, because by informing on you he can look for every advantage. So, because of the certain gains from informing and the uncertain gains and certain dangers from conspiring, he must be a very true friend, or a thoroughly determined enemy of the prince, to keep faith with you.

On the side of the conspirator, there is nothing but fear, jealousy, and the prospect of punishment. On the side of the prince there is the power of the principality, the laws, the protection of friends, and the state to defend him. If we add to all these things the popular support of the people, it is impossible that any one should be so foolish as to conspire. Whereas in general the conspirator has to fear before he carries out his plan, in this case he has also to fear what follows the crime; because on account of it he has the people for an enemy and thus cannot hope for any escape.

Endless examples could be given on this subject, but I will be content with one, which happened within the memory of our fathers. Annibale Bentivogli, who was prince in Bologna (grandfather of the present Annibale), was murdered by the Canneschi, who had conspired against him, and all but one of his family, a very young child called Giovanni, were killed. Immediately after Annibale was killed the people rose and murdered all the Canneschi. This sprung from the popular love which the house of Bentivogli enjoyed in those days in Bologna. This love was so great that after the death of Annibale, although none remained there who was able to rule the state, the Bolognese, having information that there was one of the Bentivogli family in Florence, sent to Florence for him, and gave him the government of their city, even though he was thought to be the son of a poor worker. It was ruled by him until the surviving child, Giovanni, was old enough to take over the government.

For this reason I consider that a prince ought not to worry about conspiracies when his people have love and respect him. But when the people are hostile to him, and bear hatred towards him, he ought to fear everything and everybody. Well ordered states and wise princes have taken every care to keep the nobles happy, and to keep the people satisfied and contented, for this is one of the most important goals a prince can have.

Among the best ordered and governed kingdoms of our times is France and in it are found many good institutions on which the liberty and security of the king depends. Of these, the first is the parliament and its authority. The person who founded the kingdom, knowing the ambition of the nobility and their boldness, considered that there needed to be a way to control them. On the other side, knowing the hatred of the people, founded in fear, against the nobles, he wished to protect the people. However, he did not want this to be the particular responsibility of the king. Therefore, to take away the criticism which the king would face from the nobles for favouring the people and from the people for favouring the nobles, he set up the parliament which would be one who could beat down the great and favour the lesser without the king being blamed. You could not have a better or more effective arrangement, or a greater source of security to the king and kingdom. From this, one can draw another important conclusion, that princes ought to leave affairs which may upset some people to the management of others, and keep those which will make people happy in their own hands. However, I consider that a prince ought to take care of the nobles, but not so as to make himself hated by the people.

It may appear, perhaps, to some who have examined the lives and deaths of the Roman emperors that many of them would be an example contrary to my opinion, seeing that some of them lived nobly and showed great qualities of soul, but nevertheless they lost their empire or were killed by subjects who conspired against them. Wishing therefore, to answer these objections, I will describe the characters of some of the emperors. I will show that the causes of their ruin were not different from those described by me. At the same time I will submit for consideration only those things that are relevant for studying the affairs of those times.

It seems to me sufficient to take all those emperors who succeeded to the empire from Marcus the philosopher down to Maximinus. They were Marcus and his son Commodus, Pertinax, Julian, Severus and his son Antoninus Caracalla, Macrinus, Heliogabalus, Alexander, and Maximinus.

It is necessary to note that, whereas in other principalities a prince only has to deal with the ambition of the nobles and the demands of the people, the Roman emperors had a third difficulty in having to deal with the cruelty and greed of their soldiers. This was such a difficult matter that it was the ruin of many, because it was a hard thing to give satisfaction both to soldiers and the people. The reason for this was that the people loved peace, and so they loved a contented emperor. The soldiers however loved a warlike emperor who was bold, cruel, and greedy, and they were quite willing for the emperor to exercise these qualities on the people. Then they could get double pay and satisfy their own greed and cruelty. Hence it happened that those emperors were always thrown out of power who, either by birth or training, had no great authority. Most of them, especially those who came new to the principality, recognizing the difficulty of these two opposing forces, were inclined to give satisfaction to the soldiers, caring little about injuring the people. This unfortunately was necessary, because as princes cannot help being hated by someone, they ought, in the first place, to avoid being hated by everyone. When they cannot manage this, they ought to try most of all to avoid the hatred of the most powerful. Therefore, those emperors who through inexperience had need of special support more readily favoured the soldiers than the people. Whether this policy worked to their advantage or not depended on whether the prince knew how to

maintain authority over them.

For these reasons Marcus, Pertinax, and Alexander, all being men of modest life, lovers of justice, enemies to cruelty, kind and generous to others, came to a sad end. Marcus alone lived and died respected, because he had become emperor by hereditary title, and owed nothing either to the soldiers or the people. Afterwards, being possessed of many virtues which made him respected, he always kept both groups in their place while he lived, and was neither hated nor despised.

But Pertinax was created emperor against the wishes of the soldiers. They were accustomed to live beyond the rules under Commodus, and could not bear the honest life to which Pertinax wished to reduce them. Thus having given a cause for hatred, to which hatred there was added a lack of respect for him because he was old, he was destroyed at the very beginning of his administration. It should be noted here that hatred is acquired as much by good works as by bad ones. Therefore, as I said before, a prince wishing to keep his state is very often forced to do evil. When the principality is in a bad way, you have to submit to the wishes of who you think you have need of to maintain yourself – it may be either the people or the soldiers or the nobles – and then good works will do you harm.

But let us come to Alexander, who was a man of such great goodness that among the other praises which are accorded him is this, that in the fourteen years he held the empire no one was ever put to death by him without due process of law. Nevertheless, being considered too much like a woman, and a man who allowed himself to be governed by his mother, he became despised, and the army conspired against him, and murdered him.

Turning now to the opposite characters of Commodus, Severus, Antoninus Caracalla, and Maximinus, you will find them all cruel and greedy. They were men who, to satisfy their soldiers, did not hesitate to commit every kind of wicked act against the people. All, except Severus, came to a bad end. In Severus there was so much courage that, keeping the soldiers friendly, although the people were oppressed by him, he ruled successfully. His courage made him so much admired in the sight of the soldiers and the people that the latter were kept in a way astonished, and the former were respectful and satisfied. Because the actions of this man, as a new prince, were great, I wish to show briefly that he knew well how to be the fox and the lion, which natures, as I have said above, it is necessary for a prince to imitate.

Knowing the laziness of the Emperor Julian, he persuaded the army in Sclavonia, of which he was captain, that it would be right to go to Rome and revenge the death of Pertinax, who had been killed by the emperor's own soldiers. Under this pretence, without appearing to want to be emperor, he moved the army towards Rome. He reached Italy before it was even known that he had started. On his arrival at Rome, the Senate, through fear, elected him emperor and killed Julian. After this there remained for Severus, who wished to make himself master of the whole empire, two difficulties - one in Asia, where Niger, head of the Asian army, had caused himself to be named emperor; and the other in the west where Albinus also wanted to be emperor. As he considered it dangerous to declare himself hostile to both, he decided to attack Niger and to deceive Albinus. To the latter he wrote that, being elected emperor by the Senate, he was willing to share that honour with him and sent him the title of Caesar; and moreover, he wrote that the Senate had made Albinus his colleague. This was all believed by Albinus as true. But after Severus had conquered and killed Niger, and settled affairs in the east, he returned to Rome. He complained to the Senate that Albinus, little recognizing the benefits that he had received from him, had sought to murder him and for this he was forced to punish him. Afterwards he sought him out in France, and took from him his government and life. Therefore, anyone who carefully examines the actions of this man will find him a most courageous lion and a most tricky fox. He will find him feared and respected by

everyone, and not hated by the army. It is not surprising that he, a new man, was able to hold the empire so well, because his reputation for courage always protected him from that hatred which the people might have conceived against him for his violence.

His son Antoninus was a very capable man, and had very excellent qualities. These made him admired by the people and accepted the soldiers. He was a warlike man, full of energy, who despised all delicate food and other rich delights. This caused him to be loved by the armies. Nevertheless, his fierceness and cruelties were great and far beyond belief. After endless single murders, he killed a large number of the people of Rome and all those of Alexandria. He became hated by the whole world, and feared by those he had around him, to such an extent that he was murdered in the midst of his army by a soldier. It must be noted here that killings like this, which are done with a resolved courage by those who are not afraid to die, cannot be avoided by princes. Anyone who does not fear to die can do them. But a prince may fear them less because they are very rare. He only has to be careful not to do any serious injury to those whom he employs or has around him in the service of the state. Antoninus had not been careful about this. He had dishonourably killed a brother of that soldier, whom also he threatened each day, yet retained in his own personal soldiers. This, as it turned out, was a foolish thing to do, and proved to be the emperor's ruin.

But let us come to Commodus. It should have been very easy for him to hold on to the empire. Being the son of Marcus, he had inherited it and he only had to follow in the footsteps of his father to please his people and soldiers. But, he was by nature cruel and hard, he gave himself up to amusing the soldiers and allowing them too much freedom, so that he could treat the people badly. In addition, he did not maintain the proper respect for his own position, often descending to the theatre to compete with soldiers, and doing wicked things not worthy of the emperor. He became despised by the soldiers, and being hated by one party and despised by the other, he was conspired against and killed.

It remains to discuss the character of Maximinus. He was a very warlike man, and the armies, being disgusted with the weakness of Alexander, of whom I have already spoken, killed him and elected Maximinus as emperor. He did not keep this position for long, for two things made him hated and despised. Firstly, he came from a very poor background, having once raised sheep. This was known by everyone and was considered a completely unsuitable background for an emperor. Secondly, when he first became emperor he put off going to Rome and officially taking the position. He had also gained a reputation for great cruelty by having done many wicked things, through his representatives in Rome and elsewhere in the empire. So, the whole world was moved to anger at the meanness of his birth and by fear of his cruelty. First Africa rebelled, then the Senate with all the people of Rome, and all Italy conspired against him, to which may be added his own army. The army, besieging Aquileia and meeting with difficulties in taking it, were disgusted with his cruelties, and fearing him less when they found so many people against him, murdered him.

I do not wish to discuss Heliogabalus, Macrinus, or Julian, who, being thoroughly despised, were quickly wiped out. I will bring this discussion to a conclusion by saying that princes in our times have much less trouble with this difficulty of giving too much satisfaction to their soldiers, because, notwithstanding one has to keep them happy, that is soon done. None of these princes have armies that are experienced in the governing and administration of parts of an empire, as were the armies of the Roman Empire. Whereas then it was more necessary to give satisfaction to the soldiers than to the people, it is now more necessary for all princes, except the leader of the Turks and the ruler of Egypt, to satisfy the people rather the soldiers, because the people are the most powerful.

From the above I have excluded the leader of the Turks, who always keeps twelve thousand foot soldiers and fifteen thousand horse soldiers round him on which depend the security and strength of the kingdom. It is thus necessary that putting aside every consideration for the people, he should keep them his friends. The kingdom of the Egypt is similar, being entirely in the hands of soldiers. It follows again that, without regard to the people, the leader must keep the soldiers as his friends. But you must note that the state of Egypt is unlike all other principalities. It is most like that controlled by the Pope. It cannot be called either an hereditary or a newly formed principality, because the sons of the old prince do not inherit. The person who is elected to that position by those who have authority, and his sons remain only as nobles. Because this is an ancient custom, it cannot be called a new principality, and so there are none of those difficulties in it that are met with in new ones. Thus although the prince is new, the constitution of the state is old, and it is framed so as to receive him as if he were inheriting it.

But returning to the main subject, I say that whoever will consider it will acknowledge that either being hated or despised has resulted in the fall of the emperors mentioned above. It will also be recognized how it happened that, a number of them acting in one way and a number in another, only one in each way came to a happy end and the rest to unhappy ones. It would have been useless and dangerous for Pertinax and Alexander, being new princes, to imitate Marcus, who inherited the principality. Likewise it would have been completely destructive to Caracalla, Commodus, and Maximinus to have imitated Severus. They did not have sufficient courage to enable them to follow in his footsteps. Therefore a prince, new to the principality, cannot imitate the actions of Marcus, nor, again, is it necessary to follow those of Severus. But a prince ought to take from Severus those parts which are necessary to establish his state, and from Marcus those which are proper and glorious to keep a state that may already be stable and firm.

CHAPTER 20

ARE CASTLES, AND MANY OTHER THINGS WHICH PRINCES OFTEN USE, ADVANTAGEOUS OR HURTFUL

Some princes, in order to hold the state securely, have disarmed their subjects; others have kept their subject towns divided by setting up opposing groups; others have encouraged attacks against themselves; others have tried to win over those whom they did not trust in the beginning of their governments; some have built castles; some have destroyed them. One cannot give a final judgment on all of these things unless one possesses the particular details of those states in which a decision has to be made. Nevertheless I will speak as comprehensively as possible on these matters.

There never was a new prince who has disarmed his subjects. Rather, when he has found them disarmed, he has always armed them. By arming them, those arms become yours, those men who were distrusted become faithful, and those who were faithful are kept so, and your subjects become your supporters. Although all subjects cannot be armed, yet when those whom you do arm are benefited, the others can be handled more freely. This difference in their treatment, which they quite understand, makes the former your supporters, and the latter, considering it to be necessary that those who have the most danger and service should have the most reward, excuse you. But when you disarm them, you at once offend them by showing that you distrust them, either for cowardice or for lack of loyalty. Either of these opinions creates hatred against you, and because you cannot remain unarmed, it follows that you turn to mercenaries, which are of the character already shown. Even if they happen to be good, they would not be sufficient to defend you against powerful enemies and distrusted subjects. Therefore, as I have said, a new prince in a

new principality has always distributed arms. History is full of examples. But when a prince acquires a new state, which he adds to his old one, then it is necessary to disarm the men of that state, except those who have helped him in acquiring it. These people, with time and opportunity, should be made soft and weak, and matters should be managed in such a way that all the armed men in the state should be your own soldiers who in your old state were living near you.

Those who were considered to be wise, were accustomed to say that it was necessary to hold Pistoia by opposing groups and Pisa by castles. With this idea they encouraged quarrels in some of their acquired towns so as to keep possession of them more easily. This may have been good enough in those times when Italy was in a way balanced, but I do not believe that it can be accepted as a rule for today. I do not believe that opposed groups can ever be of use. Rather, it is certain that when the enemy comes upon you in divided cities you are quickly lost, because the weakest party will always assist the outside forces and the other will not be able to resist. The Venetians, influenced, as I believe, by the above reasons, encouraged the Guelph and Ghibelline groups in their acquired cities. Although they never allowed them to start killing each other, yet they nursed these arguments amongst them, so that the citizens, caught up in their differences, would not unite against them. This, as we saw, did not afterwards turn out as expected, because, when the Venetians were beaten at Vaila, one party at once took courage and seized the state. Such methods therefore show weakness in the prince, because these opposing groups would never be permitted in a strong principality. Such methods for enabling one to manage subjects more easily are only useful in times of peace. But if war comes, this policy is a mistake.

Without doubt princes become great when they overcome the difficulties that face them, and a new prince has a greater necessity to earn a reputation than an hereditary one. Therefore fortune, especially when she desires to make a new prince great, causes enemies to arise and conspire against him, in order that he may have the opportunity of overcoming them, and thus climb higher as if by a ladder which his enemies have raised. For this reason many consider that a wise prince, when he has the opportunity, ought to create some enemies against himself, so that, having crushed them, his reputation may rise higher.

Princes, especially new ones, have found more loyalty and assistance in those men who in the beginning of their rule were distrusted than among those who in the beginning were trusted. Pandolfo Petrucci, prince of Siena, ruled his state more by those who had been distrusted than by others. But on this question one cannot speak generally, for it varies so much with the individual. I will only say this, that those men who at the commencement of a principality have been hostile, if they really need assistance to support themselves, can always be turned into supporters with the greatest ease. They will be tightly bound to serve the prince faithfully because they know it is very necessary for them through their actions to change the bad opinion which the prince had formed of them. Thus the prince always extracts more profit from them than from those who serving him in too much security, may neglect his affairs. Related to this, I must not fail to warn a prince, who by means of secret favours has acquired a new state. He must carefully consider the reasons which induced those to favour him who did so. If it was not a natural feeling towards him, but only discontent with their government, then he will only keep them friendly with great trouble and difficulty, because it will be impossible to satisfy them. And weighing well the reasons for this in those examples which can be taken from ancient and modern affairs, we shall find that it is easier for the prince to make friends of those men who were contented under the former government, and are therefore his enemies, than of those who, being discontented with it, were favourable to him and encouraged him to seize it.

It has been a custom with princes, in order to hold their states more securely, to build castles that may

serve as a warning for those who might design to work against them, and as a place of protection from a first attack. I praise this system because it has been made use of formerly. Notwithstanding that, Nicolo Vitelli in our times has been seen to destroy two castles in Citta di Castello so that he might keep that state. Guido Ubaldo, Duke of Urbino, on returning to his principality, after he had been driven out by Cesare Borgia, destroyed all the castles in that place down to the foundations, and considered that without them it would be more difficult to lose it. The Bentivogli returning to Bologna came to a similar decision. Castles, therefore, are useful or not according to circumstances. If they do you good in one way, they injure you in another. This issue can be reasoned thus: the prince who has more to fear from the people than from foreigners ought to build castles, but he who has more to fear from foreigners than from the people ought to leave them alone. The castle of Milan, built by Francesco Sforza, has made, and will make, more trouble for the house of Sforza than any other rebellion in the state. For this reason the best possible castle is not to be hated by the people. Although you may hold the castles, yet they will not save you if the people hate you. There will always be foreigners to assist a people who have taken arms against you. It has not been seen in our times that such castles have been of use to any prince unless to the Countess of Forli, when the Count Girolamo, her husband, was killed. With the castle, she was able to resist the popular attack and wait for assistance from Milan, and thus recover her state. The circumstances were such at that time that the foreigners could not assist the people. But castles were of little value to her afterwards when Cesare Borgia attacked her, and when the people, her enemy, were helped by foreigners. Therefore, it would have been safer for her, both then and before, not to have been hated by the people than to have had the castles. All these things considered then, I shall praise him who builds castles as well as him who does not, and I shall blame whoever, trusting in them, cares little about being hated by the people.

CHAPTER 21

HOW A PRINCE SHOULD CONDUCT HIMSELF SO AS TO GAIN A REPUTATION

Nothing makes a prince so famous as great achievements and setting a fine example. We have in our time Ferdinand of Aragon, the present King of Spain. He can almost be called a new prince, because he has risen, by success and glory, from being an insignificant king to be the most famous king in our part of the world. If you examine his deeds, you will find them all great and some of them extraordinary. When he first became king, he attacked Granada, and this was the foundation of his success. He did this quietly at first and without any fear of others standing against him, because he kept the minds of the barons of Castile occupied in thinking of the war and not anticipating any innovations. Thus, they did not perceive that by these means he was acquiring power and authority over them. He was able with the money of the Church and of the people to sustain his armies, and by that long war to lay the foundation for the military skill which has since distinguished him. In addition, always using religion as a justification, in order to undertake greater schemes, he devoted himself with great cruelty to driving out and clearing his kingdom of the Moors. There could not be a more admirable example, nor one more rare. Using this same reason, he attacked Africa, he began fighting in Italy, and he has finally attacked France. Thus his achievements and designs have always been so remarkable that they have kept the minds of his people in admiration and kept them occupied with carrying them out. His actions have arisen in such a way, one out of the other, that people have never been given enough time to work steadily against him.

It greatly assists a prince to set unusual examples in internal affairs, similar to those which are told of Bernabo da Milano. When he had the opportunity in civil life to take account of someone who had done

some extraordinary thing, either good or bad, he would use some method of rewarding or punishing him which would be much spoken about. A prince ought, above all things, to always try in every action to develop the reputation of being a great and remarkable man.

A prince is also respected when he is either a true friend or an absolute enemy, that is to say, when, without any reservation, he declares himself in favour of one party against the other. This course will always be more advantageous than standing neutral. If two of your powerful neighbours come to blows, you have either to fear the winner or not. In either case it will always be more advantageous for you to support one of them and to actively make war. If you do not declare yourself, you will invariably be attacked by the conqueror, to the pleasure and satisfaction of the loser, and you will have no reasons to offer, nor anything to protect or to shelter you. The conqueror does not want doubtful friends who will not aid him in the time of difficulty, and the loser will not protect you because you did not willingly, sword in hand, follow his fate.

Antiochus went into Greece, being sent for by the Aetolians to drive out the Romans. He sent messengers to the Achaeans, who were friends of the Romans, urging them to remain neutral. On the other hand, the Romans urged them to take up arms. This question came to be discussed in the council of the Achaeans, where the representative of Antiochus urged them to stand neutral. To this the Roman representative answered: "As for that which has been said, that it is better and more advantageous for your state not to interfere in our war, nothing can be more wrong. By not interfering you will be left without favour or consideration, and will become the prize of the conqueror." Thus it will always happen that the one who is not your friend will demand your neutrality, while the one who is your friend will beg you to declare yourself with arms. Weak princes, to avoid present dangers, generally follow the neutral path, and are generally ruined. But when a prince declares himself courageously in favour of one side, if the party with whom he joins himself conquers, although the conqueror may be powerful and may have him at his mercy, yet he is indebted to him, and a bond of friendship is established. Men are never so low as to become a symbol of ungratefulness by oppressing you. Victories after all are never so complete that the winner must not show some regard, especially to justice. But if the one you support loses, you may be sheltered by him, and while he is able he may aid you, and you can become companions on a fortune that may rise again.

In the second case, when those who fight are of such a character that you do not feel threatened by whoever wins, it becomes even more important to support one side. By doing this, you assist at the destruction of one by the aid of another. Because of your much needed assistance, the conqueror remains dependent on you. It must be noted here that a prince should never join with one more powerful than himself for the purposes of attacking others, unless it is absolutely necessary. If he conquers you are at his mercy, and as much as possible princes ought to avoid being in a weaker position to anyone. The Venetians joined with France against the Duke of Milan, which caused their ruin, and could have been avoided. But when it cannot be avoided, as happened to the Florentines when the Pope and Spain sent armies to attack Lombardy, then in such a case, for the above reasons, the prince ought to support one of the parties.

No Government should imagine that it can choose perfectly safe courses. It should expect to have to take very doubtful ones because in ordinary affairs one never seeks to avoid one trouble without running into another. Wisdom consists of knowing how to distinguish the character of troubles, and how to choose the lesser evil.

A prince ought also be seen to support people of ability, and to honour the skilled in every art. At the same time he should encourage his citizens to perform their jobs peacefully, both in commerce and agriculture, and in every other field, so that people are not worried about increasing their possessions for fear that they might be taken away from them or about opening up trade for fear of taxes. The prince ought to offer rewards to whoever wishes to do things like these which may bring honour to his city or state.

In addition, a prince ought to amuse the people with entertainments and ceremonies at appropriate times of the year, and as every city is divided into tradesmen's organisations or into societies, he ought to respect such groups, and associate with them sometimes. He should show himself to be an example of good behaviour and generosity, but nevertheless, always maintain the awareness of his high rank.

CHAPTER 22

CONCERNING THE PERSONAL STAFF OF PRINCES

The choice of staff is very important to a prince, and they are good or not according to the discrimination of the prince. The first opinion which one forms of a prince, and of his capability, is by observing the people he has around him. When they are capable and faithful, he may always be considered wise because he has known how to recognize the capable and to keep them faithful. But when they are otherwise, one cannot form a good opinion of him, for the prime error which he made was in choosing them.

Everyone who knew Antonio da Venafro as the minister of Pandolfo Petrucci, prince of Siena, who would consider Pandolfo to be a very clever man in having Venafro on his staff. There are three classes of minds: one which understands by itself, another which appreciates what others understood, and a third which neither understands by itself nor through the explanation of others. The first is the most excellent, the second is good, and the third is useless. Therefore, it follows necessarily that, if Pandolfo was not in the first rank, he was certainly in the second. Whenever one has sufficient judgment to know good and bad when it is said and done, although he himself may not have the initiative, yet he can recognize the good and the bad in his staff. The one he can praise and the other correct. Thus the person cannot hope to deceive him, and is kept honest.

But to enable a prince to form an opinion of his staff, there is one test which never fails. When you see someone thinking more of his own interests than of yours, and seeking inwardly his own profit in everything, such a man will never make a good servant. Nor will you ever be able to trust him, because he who has the state of another in his hands ought never to think of himself. He should always think of his prince and never pay any attention to matters in which the prince is not concerned.

On the other hand, to keep his servant honest the prince ought to reward him, honouring him, enriching him, doing him kindnesses, sharing the honours and concerns with him. At the same time let him see that he cannot stand alone, so that many honours may not make him desire more, many riches make him wish for more, and that many problems may make him afraid to take chances. When, therefore, servants, and princes towards servants, are thus disposed, they can trust each other. But when it is otherwise, the end will always be bad for either one or the other.

CHAPTER 23

HOW FLATTERERS SHOULD BE AVOIDED

I do not wish to leave out an important branch of this subject, because it is a danger from which it is difficult to protect princes, unless they are very careful and discriminating. It is that of flatterers. The courts are full of such people, because men are so wrapped up in their own affairs, and in a way so deceived in them, that it is difficult to protect them from this danger. If they wish to defend themselves, they run the danger of becoming despised. The only way to guard yourself from flatterers is to let people understand that to tell you the truth does not offend you. However, when everyone feels free to tell you the truth, respect for you goes down.

Therefore a wise prince ought to follow a third course by choosing the wise men in his state, and giving to them alone the liberty of speaking the truth to him, and then only of those things of which he inquires and of none others. However, he ought to question them about everything, and listen to their opinions, and afterwards form his own conclusions. With these councillors, separately and collectively, he ought to behave in such a way that each of them should know that the more freely he speaks, the more he will be preferred. Outside of these, he should listen to no one, pursue the thing resolved on, and stick to his decisions. He who does otherwise is either beaten by flatterers, or is so often changed by varying opinions that he is laughed at.

I wish to give a modern example of this. Fra Luca, the man of affairs to Maximilian, the present emperor, speaking of the emperor, said: He consulted with no one, yet never got his own way in anything. This arose because of his following a practice the opposite to the above. The emperor is a secretive man – he does not communicate his plans to any one, nor does he receive opinions on them. But because in carrying them into effect they become revealed and known, they are at once argued against by the men whom he has around him, and he, being easily led, is made to change them. Hence it follows that those things he does one day he undoes the next, and no one ever understands what he wishes or intends to do, and no one can rely on his decisions.

A prince, therefore, always ought to take advice, but only when he wishes and not when others wish. He ought to make it clear that he does not want advice unless he asks for it. However, he ought to constantly inquire, and afterwards be a patient listener concerning the things he asked about. Also, on learning that anyone, on any matter, has not told him the truth, he should let his anger be felt.

There may be some who think that a prince might appear to be wise not through his own ability, but because he has good advisers around him. Such a belief is clearly wrong, because a prince who is not wise himself will never take good advice, unless by chance he has yielded his affairs entirely to one person who happens to be a very clever man. In this case indeed, he may be well governed, but it would not be for long, because such a governor would in a short time take his state away from him.

If a prince who is not wise takes advice from more than one person he will always get different bits of advice, and he will not know how to accommodate them. Each of the advisors will think of his own interests and the prince will not know how to control them or to see through them. This is typical, because men will always deceive you, unless they are kept honest by constraint. Therefore it must be inferred that good advice, no matter where it comes from, is a result of the wisdom of the prince. The wisdom of the prince does not come from good advice.

CHAPTER 24

WHY THE PRINCES OF ITALY HAVE LOST THEIR STATES

The previous suggestions, if they are carefully followed, will enable a new prince to appear well established, and make him at once more secure in the state than if he had been long seated there. This is important because the actions of a new prince are more critically observed than those of an hereditary one. When princes are seen to be capable they gain more men and make them more loyal than ancient blood. This is because men are attracted more by the present than by the past. When they find the present good, they enjoy it and seek no further. They will also strongly defend a prince if he does not fail them in other things. Thus it will be a double glory for him to have established a new principality, and enriched and strengthened it with good laws, good arms, good friends and good leadership. Similarly, it will be a double dishonour for someone who is born a prince to lose his state through a lack of wisdom.

If we look at those princes who have lost their states in Italy in our times, such as the King of Naples, the Duke of Milan, and others, there will be found in them, firstly, one common problem in regard to arms from the causes which have already been discussed at length. Secondly, some will be seen, either to have had the people hostile, or if he has had the people friendly, he has not known how to secure the nobles. In the absence of these problems, states that have enough power to keep an army in the field cannot be lost.

Philip of Macedon (not the father of Alexander the Great, but the one who was conquered by Titus Quintius) did not have a big state compared to the greatness of the Romans and of Greece who attacked him. Yet, being a warlike man who knew how to attract the people and secure the nobles, he sustained the war against his enemies for many years, and if in the end he lost some of his cities, nevertheless he retained the kingdom.

Therefore, our princes should not accuse fortune for the loss of their principalities after so many years' possession, but rather their own laziness. In quiet times they never thought there could be change (it is a common weakness in people not to make any provision in the calm against the storm). When afterwards the bad times came, they thought of running away and not of defending themselves. They hoped that the people, disgusted with the attitude of the conquerors, would call them back. This course, when others fail, may be good, but it is very bad to have neglected all other possibilities for that. You should never wish to fall because you hoped to find someone later on to restore you. This either does not happen or, if it does, it will not be good for your security. Being saved is of no use unless it is by your own efforts. The only reliable, certain, and lasting ways are those that depend on yourself and your courage.

CHAPTER 25

WHAT ROLE FORTUNE PLAYS IN HUMAN AFFAIRS AND HOW TO RESIST HER

Many people have had, and still have, the opinion that the affairs of the world are governed by fortune and by God and humans with their wisdom cannot direct them and no one can even help them. Because of this they would have us believe that it is not necessary to labour much in affairs, but to let chance govern them. This opinion has gained more credit in our times because of the great changes in affairs which have

been seen, and may still be seen, every day, beyond all human prediction. Sometimes thinking over this, I am in some degree inclined to their opinion. Nevertheless, in order not to destroy our free will, I believe that fortune decides half of our actions, but that she still leaves the other half, or perhaps a little less, for us to direct.

I compare fortune to one of those great rivers, which when in flood covers the plains, sweeping away trees and buildings, bearing away the soil from place to place. Everything flies before it, all yield to its violence, without being able in any way to resist it. But although its nature is like that, it does not follow therefore that people, when the weather becomes fine, should not make preparations, both with canals and defences, so that in the future the rising waters are directed away, and their force is not so unrestrained and dangerous. It is the same with fortune, who shows her power where courage has not made preparations to resist her. She turns her forces where she knows that walls have not been raised to constrain her.

Now if you consider Italy, which is the centre of these changes and which has given them their strength, you will see it to be an open country without walls and without any defences. If it had been defended with proper courage, as are Germany, Spain, and France, this invasion would not have made such great changes or it would not have come at all. And this I consider enough to say concerning resistance to fortune in general.

But confining myself more to the particular, a prince may be seen to be happy today and ruined tomorrow without having shown any change of attitude or character. This, I believe, arises firstly from causes that have already been discussed at length, namely, that the prince who relies entirely on fortune is lost when it changes. I also believe that he will be successful if he directs his actions according to the spirit of the times, and that if his actions do not accord with the times, he will not be successful. Men achieve glory and riches by various methods: one with caution, another with haste; one by force, another by skill; one by patience, another by its opposite; and each one succeeds in reaching the goal by a different method. One can also see of two cautious men that one attains his end, and the other fails. Similarly, two men seem to be equally successful, one by being cautious, the other by taking risks. All these differences arise from nothing else except whether or not they conform in their methods to the spirit of the times. This follows from what I have said, that two men working differently bring about the same effect, and of two working similarly, one attains his object and the other does not.

Changes in personal estate also issue from this. If someone governs himself with caution and patience, and times and affairs come together in the right way, then his administration is successful and his fortune is made. But if times and affairs change, he is ruined if he does not change his course of action. But a man is not often found sufficiently clever to know how to accommodate himself to the change. This is because he cannot deviate from what nature inclines him to do, and also because, having always been successful by acting in one way, he cannot be persuaded that it is well to leave it. Therefore, the cautious man, when it is time to turn adventurous, does not know how to do it, hence he is ruined. If he had changed his conduct with the times, fortune would not have changed.

Pope Julius the Second went to work boldly and energetically in all his affairs and found the times and circumstances conform so well to that line of action that he always met with success. Consider his first campaign against Bologna, when Giovanni Bentivogli was still alive. The Venetians were not agreeable to it, nor was the King of Spain, and he had the campaign still under discussion with the King of France. Nevertheless he personally entered into it with his accustomed boldness and energy, a move which made

Spain and the Venetians stand undecided and passive, the latter from fear, the former from desire to recover the kingdom of Naples. On the other hand, he managed to involve the King of France, because that king, having observed the movement, and wanting to make the Pope his friend so as to humble the Venetians, found it impossible to refuse him. Therefore Julius with his bold action achieved what no other pope with simple human wisdom could have done. If he had waited in Rome until he could get away, with his plans arranged and everything fixed as any other pope would have done, he would never have succeeded because the King of France would have made a thousand excuses, and the others would have raised a thousand fears.

I will leave his other actions alone, as they were all similar, and they all succeeded, because the shortness of his life did not let him experience the contrary. However, if circumstances had arisen which required him to go cautiously, his ruin would have followed, because he would never have deviated from those ways to which nature inclined him.

I conclude, therefore that, fortune being changeable and mankind fixed in their ways, so long as the two are in agreement men are successful, but they are unsuccessful when they fall out. For my part I consider that it is better to be adventurous than cautious, because fortune is a woman. If you wish to keep her under it is necessary to beat and treat her badly. She allows herself to be mastered by the adventurous rather than by those who go to work more coldly. She is, therefore, always, like a woman, a lover of young men because they are less cautious, more violent, and command her with more boldness.

CHAPTER 26

A CALL TO LIBERATE ITALY FROM THE INVADERS

After reflecting on what I have said above, I have wondered whether the present times were right for a new prince, and whether there were elements that would give an opportunity to a wise and virtuous one to introduce a new order of things which would bring honour to him and good to the people of this country. It appears to me that so many things now come together to favour a new prince that I never knew a time more suitable than the present.

And if, as I said, it was necessary that the people of Israel should be in chains so as to make the ability of Moses clear; that the Persians should be oppressed by the Medes so as to discover the greatness of the soul of Cyrus; and that the Athenians should be scattered to illustrate the capabilities of Theseus: then at the present time, in order to discover the virtue of an Italian spirit, it was necessary that Italy should be reduced to the conditions that she is now in, that she should be more enslaved than the Hebrews, more oppressed than the Persians, more scattered than the Athenians, without a head, without order, beaten, exploited, torn, invaded, and suffering every kind of ill fortune.

Although lately some hope may have been shown by one, which made us think he was chosen by God to save us, nevertheless it was afterwards seen that fortune rejected him. So Italy, left as without life, waits for someone to heal her wounds and to put an end to the destruction and exploitation of Lombardy, to the cheating and taxing of the kingdom and of Tuscany and to clean those running sores. It is seen how she begs God to send someone who shall deliver her from these wrongs and oppressions. It is seen also that she is ready and willing to follow a flag, if only someone will raise it.

Nor is there to be seen at present one in whom Italy can place more hope than in your noble house, with its courage and fortune favoured by God and by the Church of which it is now the chief, and which could be made the head of this liberation. This will not be difficult if you remember the actions and lives of the men I have named. Although they were great and wonderful men, yet they were only men, and each one of them had no more opportunity than the present offers. Their campaigns were neither more just nor easier than this, nor was God more their friend than He is yours.

On our side there is great justice, because that war is just which is necessary, and arms are blessed when there is no other hope but in them. Here there is the greatest willingness, and where the willingness is great the difficulties cannot be great if you will only imitate those men to whom I have directed your attention. In addition to this, how extraordinary the ways of God have been shown to be, beyond example: the sea is divided, a cloud has led the way, the rock has poured forth water, it has rained food from heaven. Everything has contributed to your greatness, you ought to do the rest. God is not willing to do everything, and thus take away our free will and that share of glory which belongs to us.

It is not surprising that none of the Italians mentioned above have been able to achieve all that is expected from your glorious house, and that in so many revolutions in Italy, and in so many campaigns, it has always appeared as if military virtue was dead. This has happened because the old order of things was not good, and none of us have known how to find a new one. Nothing honours a man more than to establish new laws when he himself is newly risen. Such things when they are well founded and proper will make him loved and admired, and in Italy there are great opportunities to do this.

Here there is great courage in the limbs while it fails in the head. Look carefully at the individual hand-to-hand fights, to see the excellence of the Italians in strength, speed, and skill. But when it comes to armies they are hopeless. This is entirely the result of poor leadership. Those who are capable are not obeyed. Each one thinks they are capable, but none stands out above the rest, either in courage or fortune. Hence for so long a time, and during so much fighting in the past twenty years, whenever there has been a wholly Italian army, it has always performed badly. The first example of this is Il Taro, and then there are Allesandria, Capua, Genoa, Vaila, Bologna, Mestri.

If, therefore, your great house wishes to follow these remarkable men who have saved their country, it is necessary before all things, as a true foundation for every campaign, to be provided with your own forces, because there can be no more faithful, truer, or better soldiers. Although individually they are good, together they will be much better when they find themselves commanded by their prince, respected by him, and maintained at his expense. Therefore it is necessary to be prepared with such arms, so that you can be defended against foreigners by Italian courage.

And although Swiss and Spanish foot soldiers may be considered very strong, nevertheless there is a weakness in both, by reason of which a third order would not only be able to oppose them, but might be relied upon to defeat them. For the Spaniards cannot resist horse soldiers, and the Swiss are afraid of foot soldiers whenever they encounter them in close fighting. Owing to this, as has been and may again be seen, the Spaniards are unable to resist French horse, and the Swiss are beaten by Spanish foot soldiers. Although complete proof of this latter cannot be shown, nevertheless there was some evidence of it at the battle of Ravenna, when the Spanish foot soldiers were faced by German soldiers, who fight in the same way as the Swiss. The Spaniards, through skill and speed and with the aid of their shields, got in under the spears of the Germans and stood out of danger, able to attack, while the Germans stood helpless. If the horse soldiers had not quickly attacked, all would have been over with them. It is possible, therefore,

knowing the weaknesses of both these soldiers, to invent a new army, which will resist attacks by horse soldiers and not be afraid of foot soldiers. This need not create a new order of arms, but may simply be a variation upon the old. These are the kinds of improvements which confer reputation and power upon a new prince.

This opportunity, therefore, ought not to be allowed to pass for letting Italy at last see her liberator appear. Nor can one express the love with which he would be received in all those parts of Italy which have suffered so much from these foreign attacks, with what thirst for revenge, with what strong faith, with what devotion, with what tears. What door would be closed to him? Who would refuse obedience to him? What envy would hinder him? What Italian would refuse him to honour him? To all of us this present situation is unbearable. Let, therefore, your great family take up this task with that courage and hope with which all just causes are undertaken, so that under its flag our native country may be made great again, and under your command that saying of Petrarch will be shown to be true

Virtue against fury shall advance the fight
And in the battle soon shall put to flight
For the old Roman courage is not dead
And still burns in the Italians' hearts.

Topic word families included: prince, principality, rebel, hereditary, inherit, baron, invade, duke, genius (3x), hostile, oppress, siege, besieged, cardinal, mercenaries, auxiliaries, despise, conspire, emperor, parliament, senate, armed, arms, disarm, flatterers, campaign (22 topic families)

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