

## 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

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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.

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## 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,

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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.



