

good and evil, may be seduced by maxims that flatter their passions. But if it be wicked to corrupt the Innocence of private men, whose influence is but small in the affairs of the World; is it not much more so to pervert the hearts of those that are appointed to govern nations, to administer Justice, to be examples of goodness and magnanimity to their Subjects, and to resemble the Supreme Being in bounty and mercy? Inundations, and lightnings, and Pestilences, which destroy Cities and desolate Provinces, are not so fatal to the World, as corrupt morals and undisciplin'd passions in Princes. Those Scourges are but temporary, they only affect particular countries; and such losses, how pitiable soever, are still to be repaired: but the enormities of Princes are long felt by whole nations, and leave deep traces behind them. They have it in their power to do good or evil when they please: and in how wretched a situation must a people be when they have every thing to fear from the abuse of that power in their Sovereign; when their properties may hourly become a prey to his avarice, their liberty to his caprice, their repose to his ambition, and their lives to his cruelty! Such must be the circumstances of a State, governed by a Prince of Machiavel's forming.

I cannot conclude this Preface without a short animadversion upon the notion, *that Machiavel tells us rather what Princes really do, than what they ought to do*: a conceit, indeed, which has pleased many, because it seems to have something satirical in it. But those who have pronounced in so decisive and injurious a manner against Sovereigns, were probably led into that error, either by the examples of some bad Princes who lived in Machiavel's time and are cited by him, or by those of some other Tyrants that were a disgrace to human nature. I must desire these Censors however to remember that Royalty, of all other conditions, is most liable to seduction; that it requires an extraordinary degree of virtue in a Sovereign to resist it; and therefore that it ought not to seem at all wonderful, if in so numerous an order as that of Princes, there are some bad ones to be found. But if we meet with such as Nero, Caligula and Tiberius amongst the Roman Emperors; we likewise have the pleasure of seeing the names of Titus, Trajan, and Antoninus immortalized for their virtues: so that it is highly unjust to stigmatize a whole body for the enormities of a few individuals.

The names of good Princes alone should be recorded in History; and those of others suffered to perish with their crimes. This indeed would greatly diminish the number of Histories, but the world would be the better for it: as the honour of living in the Annals of
fame