

instances that have happened in our own times and are still fresh in every one's memory: the one is of Francisco Sforza; the other of Cæsar Borgia. Sforza raised himself from a private condition to be Duke of Milan by due means and dint of extraordinary virtue; and with very little difficulty maintained what he had been at infinite pains to acquire. On the other hand, Cæsar Borgia (commonly called Duke Valentine) got possession of several territories by the good fortune of his father, Pope Alexander VI. but soon lost them after the death of that Pontif; though he exerted his utmost endeavours and did every thing that a wise or brave man could or ought to do, in order to establish himself in those States which he had acquired by the arms and good fortune of others. For though, as I said above, a good foundation may not be laid before a man arrives at dominion, it may possibly be done afterwards, if he is possessed of an extraordinary share of abilities: but it will always be with great difficulty to the Architect, and danger to the Edifice. If, therefore, we consider the Duke's conduct from first to last, we shall see how firm a foundation he had laid for future greatness: and perhaps it may not seem altogether unnecessary here to enter into some detail of his actions, as I know no better pattern that can be proposed for the imitation of a new Prince: for if the schemes which he had concerted proved abortive in the end, it was not to be imputed to any failure in him, but to the extreme malignity of fortune.

Alexander VI. was very desirous of aggrandizing his Son: but saw many present and future difficulties in his way. For in the first place, he perceived that he could not make him Sovereign of any State which was independent on the Church: and if he should endeavour to dismember the Ecclesiastical State, he knew very well that neither the Duke of Milan, nor the Venetians would suffer it; as the latter had already taken Rimini and Faenza under their protection. He was likewise sensible that the forces of Italy, especially those that were capable of doing him any material service, were in the hands of such as had the greatest reason to be apprehensive of the papal power, as the Urfini, the Colonna, and their friends. It was necessary therefore to break those connexions and attachments, and to throw the States of Italy into confusion; that so he might securely make himself master of some of them. And this was no difficult matter to effect, as he found the Venetians were soliciting the French, upon other accounts, to make a second expedition into Italy; which he was so far from opposing, that he dissolved the marriage betwixt King Lewis XII. and his first Wife, on purpose to facilitate it. That Prince accordingly