

## C H A P. XII.

*How many sorts of Soldiery there are; and concerning Mercenaries.*

HAVING spoken particularly of the several sorts of Principalities, as I propos'd in the beginning; and not only shewn the methods which many have taken both to acquire and maintain them, but in some measure considered the causes that chiefly contributed either to their grandeur or decay, I shall now proceed to treat in a general manner of the offensive and defensive means which they are to make use of upon occasion.

We have already said, that if a Prince does not lay a good foundation to build upon, he will certainly be ruined at last. Now the best foundations of all States, whether new, old, or mixed, are good Laws and a proper military force to support them [b]: but since good Laws cannot have any effect without a proper force, and such a force will always give due weight to such Laws; I shall here say nothing more of Laws, but confine myself to what regards the forces and military establishment of Princes.

I say then, that the forces with which any Prince must defend his dominions, are either his own or mercenary, or auxiliary, or mixed. Mercenaries and auxiliaries are both unserviceable and dangerous; and the Prince that trusts only to mercenaries will never sit firm or secure upon his throne: for they are always disunited amongst themselves, ambitious, perfidious, insolent to their friends, abject to their enemies, without any fear of God, or good faith towards men; so that the person who confides in them is sure to be ruined whenever he is attacked: they will prey upon him themselves in time of peace, and when a war breaks out they will sacrifice him to the enemy. The reason of this is, because they neither have any affection for him, nor principle of honour, nor any other motive to keep them firmly attached to his Service, except their pay; which is not a consideration of sufficient weight to prevail upon them to die for him. They are ready enough to receive their pay whilst there is nothing to be done for it: but if they hear of an engagement they will either desert beforehand, or run away in the day of battle. It would be a very easy matter to prove this, as Italy itself is now ruined by trusting so many years to mercenary troops; which at first indeed seem'd very brave and

[b] "Imperatoriam Majestatem (says Justinian in the preface to his Institutes) non solum armis decoratam, sed etiam legibus oportet esse armatam, ut utrumque tempus, & bellorum & pacis, recte possit gubernari".