

in which men now live, is so different from that in which they ought to live, that one who deviates from the common course of practice, and endeavours to do what indeed he should do, is in the high road to ruin, whilst he thinks he is taking the only means to secure himself from it. Thus, a good man and one that is desirous to approve himself as such in all respects, must certainly be undone amongst so many others of a different principle [y]. So that it is absolutely necessary for a Prince, who would support himself, to learn not to be good sometimes, and to make use of that knowledge upon occasion, as the exigency of his affairs may require.

Laying aside then all imaginary Schemes, that relate to the institution of a Prince, in order to come to the truth of the matter, I say that all men, but especially Princes, (who are placed in a more conspicuous point of view) are marked and distinguished by some quality or other, which procures them either reputation or dishonour. For instance, one is accounted liberal, another sparing [z]; some profuse, others rapacious; some are cruel, others merciful; some faithless, others punctual and exact in performing their engagements; some are effeminate and pusillanimous, others bold and courageous; some courteous and humane, others haughty and disdainful; some are lascivious, others are chaste; some men of probity and plain dealing, others double hearted and deceitful; some are stiff and reserved, others affable and easy of access; some again are grave, others full of levity; some religious, others wicked and profligate, and so on.—Every one, I am sensible, will allow that a Prince endowed with all the good qualities, just now mentioned, would be much to be praised, and an inestimable treasure: but since the frailty and perverseness of human nature is such, that it is impossible for any man to put them all in practice, even if he was in possession of them (which yet is not to be expected) [a] it is necessary that a Prince should be so well instructed, as to know how to avoid the infamy of those vices, which may deprive him of his State, and to take great care not to commit others, (which perhaps may not be altogether so pernicious in their consequences) if he can possibly help it: but if that is not possible, it

[y] See the instance of Pertinax towards the latter end of the nineteenth Chapter.

[z] Machiavel, says *mifero*, which is a Florentine word; because *avaro*, says he, in our language signifies, a man that enriches himself by rapine, and plundering others; whereas we call him *mifero*, who is too sparing of his own: a parenthesis which would have broken the thread of the discourse, and therefore, as the Editor thought, would be here better thrown into the form of a Note. The Latins use the word *miser* in the same sense,

Quærit et inventis miser abstinet, ac timet uti.

HOR. de. Art. poet.

And we say *miser*, *miserly*, and *miserably covetous*.

[a] “Adhuc nemo extitit, says the younger Pliny in his Panegyric, cujus virtutes nullo vitiorum consortio læderentur.”