

EXAMEN. CHAP. XVI.

PHIDIAS and Alcamenes, two celebrated Statuaries, made each a Statue of Minerva for the Athenians; the most approved of which was to be placed upon the top of a lofty pillar. When they were both presented to the public, that of Alcamenes had the preference. The other, they said, was too large and heavy. But Phidias, not regarding the judgment of the vulgar, desired that, as the Statue was design'd to be placed on the top of a pillar, they might both be elevated to the destined height: which being complied with, that of Phidias carried the prize.—Phidias owed his success to the study of Optics and Proportion. The rules of Proportion ought likewise to be observed in Politics; different places and circumstances require different maxims; for it is impossible that the same should equally suit all: what would be of admirable use in a great kingdom, might prove the ruin of a small State: Luxury, for instance, which is the offspring of plenty, and causes riches to circulate through all the veins of a State, makes a great kingdom flourish; it is the mother of industry, it multiplies the occasions of the rich, and establishes a connection betwixt them and the poor [m]. If some ill advised Politician should take it into his head to banish it out of a great Empire, that Empire would soon begin to languish and fall to decay. Whereas, on the contrary, luxury would be the destruction of a little State: money must be sent out of it in greater quantities than it could come in; which would soon bring to delicate a constitution into a remediless consumption.—It ought, therefore, to be an indispensable rule with a Politician, not to confound little States with great ones; and in this point, Machiavel is guilty of a capital error.

My first objection is, that he uses the word *Liberality* in too vague a sense: he does not properly distinguish betwixt that and Prodigality. “A Prince, says he, that has any great designs to accomplish, should by all means endeavour to gain the reputation of Liberality; but in fact he ought to be covetous.”—Now I assert on the contrary, that he ought

with austerity, all things would not have been so easily extorted from him.” *Bodin de Repub. lib. II. cap. iv. towards the end. See also lib. VI. cap. ii.* It must be observed, when he says *a bad man makes a good King*, that he does not take the word *bad* in its full extent, but only means *austere* and *rigorous* by it.—This learned man's opinion, therefore, which at first seems a paradox, will be found to be justly grounded when it is closely examined.

[m] It is needless to say any thing here of the public advantages or disadvantages that attend Luxury; as that Subject has been already touched upon in the Notes upon Book 7. of the History of Florence towards the end.—Whoever desires to see this matter more fully discussed, with the arguments *pro & con*, may consult Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees*, and the answer to it, by a Country Clergyman. See also the Article *Mandeville* in the General Dictionary.

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