

shew of them will be of service to him. It is honourable to seem merciful, courteous, religious, punctual and sincere, and indeed to be so: but it is necessary at the same time that he should have his mind so modelled, and be so much master of himself, that he may know how to alter his conduct upon occasion.—I say then that a Prince, especially a new one, cannot possibly practise all those qualities which make men esteemed good and virtuous: he will often be obliged, for the preservation of his State, to violate the laws of Charity, Humanity, and Religion: and therefore he should be ready prepared to shift his sails according to the wind that blows; and, as I said before, never to do evil if he can help it; but if he is compelled by downright necessity, to make no scruple of it [m]. He must constantly be upon his guard, that nothing may ever drop from his mouth but what seems to proceed from a heart full of goodness, mercy, truth, humanity, and Religion; but particularly of the last: for mankind in general form their judgment rather from appearances than realities: all men have eyes, but not many have the gift of penetration: every one sees your exterior, but few can discern what you have in your heart; and those few dare not oppose the voice of the multitude, who have the Majesty of their Prince on their side: besides, the actions of all men, but particularly of Princes (of which no private Judge can properly take cognizance) are generally condemned or approved by the event of them. Let it then be the chief care of a Prince to preserve himself and his State: the means which he uses for that purpose, whatsoever they are, will always be esteemed honourable, and applauded by every one [n]: for the opinion of the Vulgar is always determined by appearances and the issue of things; and as the world is chiefly composed of such as are called the Vulgar, the voice of the few is seldom or never heard or regarded, but when the others have nothing to found their judgment

[m] The above cited Gaspar d'Auvergne says upon this passage as follows, "although the author may here seem to run strange lengths, and not only to deviate from the paths of virtue, but to authorize vice; yet he could not have said less in justice to his plan, and for the attainment of the ends which he proposes. For it is a very difficult matter for a Prince to support himself amongst powerful and ambitious neighbours as well as disloyal and rebellious Subjects, without sometimes encroaching a little upon the laws of conscience. Such is the course of this World (naturally wicked indeed) that even Princes, in the midst of their royalty, cannot long maintain their dignity, without the practice of vice upon occasion: that so, when the necessity ceases, they may immediately return to virtue."—It is hard to say, whether the author, or this commentator upon him, is the bolder and wickeder of the two.

[n] "Nihil gloriosum, nisi tutum; & omnia retinendæ dominationis honesta." *Sullust.* "Viro aut urbi Principi, nihil injustum quod fructuosum," says Thucydides. And Tacitus tells us that Agrippina, the mother of Nero, made light of sacrificing every thing for a crown: "Decus, pudorem, corpus, cuncta regno viliora habere." *Annal.* 12.—Such are the dictates of ambition, and such the consciences of Princes and Politicians!

upon,