

Public.—Pope Sixtus V. Philip II. of Spain, and Oliver Cromwell, were esteemed enterprizing, but not good men [q].

Machiavel reasons no better upon the *motives* that should induce Princes to practise deceit and hypocrisy. The moral that he gives to the fable of the Centaur, though ingenious, is misapplied and inconclusive: for though Chiron was half-man and half-beast, it does not follow from thence that Princes should be fierce and deceitful. \* A man must be very fond surely of setting up for a Preceptor of Villains, when he is forced to have recourse to such weak and far-fetched arguments to support his doctrine.—He says, “that a Prince ought to have the qualities of a Lion and a Fox; from whence we may learn that a Prince is not obliged to keep his word.” [A strange consequence indeed! there are Foxes and Wolves in a forest; *therefore* a Prince ought to be a Knave] [r]. If one could extract any sort of probity or meaning out of such a confused manner of arguing, it must be by giving it this turn. The world may be compared to a party of Gamesters; amongst whom some play fair, and others are sharpers. A person therefore, who sits down to play in this company, ought to be acquainted with all the tricks and finesses of the game; not in order to practise them himself, but to guard against the knavery of others.

To proceed. “As all men are wicked and faithless, says he, and will not keep their engagements with you, you are not obliged to keep your’s with them.” But here he flatly contradicts himself: for presently after he says, “that such as know how to dissemble, will always find simple people to practise upon.”—All men are Knaves, and yet there are others that are fools; how is this to be reconciled?

It is likewise utterly false that all men are knaves. One must be a Misanthrope indeed, not to be convinced that there are many good and worthy men in every Society; and that there are numbers of others who are neither good nor bad. But if Machiavel thought all the World were knaves, what occasion was there for this abominable maxim? Nay, supposing men were as bad as he represents them; would it follow from thence that we ought to imitate them? If Cartouche was a Highwayman and a murderer, I conclude that he was a wretch who ought to be punished; and not that I ought to regulate my conduct by his.—“If there was no honour nor virtue left in the world, said Charles the wise, the last traces of them should be found amongst Princes.”

[q] The following passage, which is in the first edition, is here struck out, “Un Prince quelque habile qu’il soit, ne peut, quand même il suivroit toutes les Maximes de Machiavel, donner le caractère de la vertu, qu’il n’a pas, aux crimes qui lui sont propres.”

[r] The first edition runs thus, “Voilà une conclusion sans premices: le Docteur du crime n’a t’il pas honte de begayer ainsi les leçons d’impiété?”

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