the extra expenses were administered with his long-practiced parsimony. If the present king of Spain[3] had been held liberal, he would not have been able to make or win so many campaigns.

Therefore, so as not to have to rob his subjects, to be able to defend himself, not to become poor and contemptible, nor to be forced to become rapacious, a prince should esteem it little to incur a name for meanness, because this is one of those vices which enable him to rule. And if someone should say: Caesar attained empire with liberality, and many others, because they have been and have been held to be liberal, have attained very great rank, I respond: either you are already a prince or you are on the path to acquiring it: in the first case this liberality is damaging; in the second it is indeed necessary to be held liberal. And Caesar was one of those who wanted to attain the principate of Rome; but if after he had arrived there, had he remained alive and not been temperate with his expenses, he would have destroyed that empire. And if someone should reply: many have been princes and have done great things with their armies who have been held very liberal, I respond to you: either the prince spends from what is his own and his subjects' or from what belongs to someone else. In the first case he should be sparing; in the other, he should not leave out any part of liberality. And for the prince who goes out with his armies, who feeds on booty, pillage, and ransom and manages on what belongs to someone else, this liberality is necessary; otherwise he would not be followed by his soldiers. And of what is not yours or your subjects' one can be a bigger giver, as were Cyrus, Caesar, and Alexander, because spending what is someone else's does not take reputation from you but adds it to you; only spending your own is what hurts you. And there is nothing that consumes itself as much as liberality: while you use it, you lose the capacity to

3. Ferdinand the Catholic.

Mansfield Translation
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use it; and you become either poor and contemptible or, to escape poverty, rapacious and hateful. Among all the things that a prince should guard against is being contemptible and hated, and liberality leads you to both. So there is more wisdom in maintaining a name for meanness, which begets infamy without hatred, than in being under a necessity, because one wants to have a name for liberality, to incur a name for rapacity, which begets infamy with hatred.

XVII

Of Cruelty and Mercy,[1] and Whether It Is Better to Be Loved Than Feared, or the Contrary

Descending next to the other qualities set forth before, I say that each prince should desire to be held merciful and not cruel; nonetheless he should take care not to use this mercy badly. Cesare Borgia was held to be cruel; nonetheless his cruelty restored the Romagna, united it, and reduced it to peace and to faith. If one considers this well, one will see that he was much more merciful than the Florentine people, who so as to escape a name for cruelty, allowed Pistoia to be destroyed.[2] A prince, therefore, so as to keep his subjects united and faithful, should not care about the infamy of cruelty, because with very few examples he will be more merciful than those who for the sake of too much mercy allow disorders to continue, from which come killings or

1. Or piety, throughout *The Prince*.

2. From 1500 to 1502 Pistoia, a city subject to Florence, was torn by factional disputes and riots. NM was there as representative of the Florentines on several occasions in 1501.

robberies; for these customarily harm[3] a whole community,[4] but the executions that come from the prince harm[5] one particular person. And of all princes, it is impossible for the new prince to escape a name for cruelty because new states are full of dangers. And Virgil says in the mouth of Dido: "The harshness of things and the newness of the kingdom force me to contrive such things, and to keep a broad watch over the borders."[6]

Nonetheless, he should be slow to believe and to move, nor should he create fear for himself, and he should proceed in a temperate mode with prudence and humanity so that too much confidence does not make him incautious and too much diffidence does not render him intolerable.

From this a dispute arises whether it is better to be loved than feared, or the reverse. The answer is that one would want to be both the one and the other; but because it is difficult to put them together, it is much safer to be feared than loved, if one has to lack one of the two. For one can say this generally of men: that they are ungrateful, fickle, pretenders and dissemblers, evaders of danger, eager for gain. While you do them good, they are yours, offering you their blood, property, lives, and children, as I said above,[7] when the need for them is far away; but, when it is close to you, they revolt. And that prince who has founded himself entirely on their words, stripped of other preparation, is ruined; for friendships that are acquired at a price and not with greatness and nobility of spirit are bought, but they are not owned and when the time comes they cannot be spent. And men have less hesitation to offend one who makes himself loved than one who makes himself feared; for love is held by a chain of obligation, which, because men are

3. lit.: offend.
4. lit.: a whole universality.
5. lit.: offend.
6. Virgil, *Aeneid* I 563-64.
7. See Chapter 9.

wicked, is broken at every opportunity for their own utility, but fear is held by a dread of punishment that never forsakes you.

The prince should nonetheless make himself feared in such a mode that if he does not acquire love, he escapes hatred, because being feared and not being hated can go together very well. This he will always do if he abstains from the property of his citizens and his subjects, and from their women; and if he also needs to proceed against someone's life,[8] he must do it when there is suitable justification and manifest cause for it. But above all, he must abstain from the property of others, because men forget the death of a father more quickly than the loss of a patrimony. Furthermore, causes for taking away property are never lacking, and he who begins to live by rapine always finds cause to seize others' property; and, on the contrary, causes for taking life[9] are rarer and disappear more quickly.

But when the prince is with his armies and has a multitude of soldiers under his control, then it is above all necessary not to care about a name for cruelty, because without this name he never holds his army united, or disposed to any feat. Among the admirable actions of Hannibal is numbered this one: that when he had a very large army, mixed with infinite kinds of men, and had led it to fight in alien lands, no dissension ever arose in it, neither among themselves nor against the prince, in bad as well as in his good fortune. This could not have arisen from anything other than his inhuman cruelty which, together with his infinite virtues, always made him venerable and terrible in the sight of his soldiers; and without it, his other virtues would not have sufficed to bring about this effect. And the writers, having considered little in this, on the one hand admire this action of his but on the other condemn the principal cause of it.

8. lit.: blood.
9. lit.: blood.

And to see that it is true that his other virtues would not have been enough, one can consider Scipio, who was very rare not only in his times but also in the entire memory of things known—whose armies in Spain rebelled against him. This arose from nothing but his excessive mercy, which had allowed his soldiers more license than is fitting for military discipline. Scipio's mercy was reproved in the Senate by Fabius Maximus, who called him the corruptor of the Roman military. After the Locrians had been destroyed by an officer of Scipio's, they were not avenged by him, nor was the insolence of that officer corrected—all of which arose from his agreeable nature, so that when someone in the Senate wanted to excuse him, he said that there were many men who knew better how not to err than how to correct errors. Such a nature would in time have sullied Scipio's fame and glory if he had continued with it in the empire; but while he lived under the government of the Senate, this damaging quality of his not only was hidden, but made for his glory.[10]

I conclude, then, returning to being feared and loved, that since men love at their convenience and fear at the convenience of the prince, a wise prince should found himself on what is his, not on what is someone else's; he should only contrive to avoid hatred, as was said.

10. On the comparison between Hannibal and Scipio, see also *Discourses on Livy* III 19-21. NM's source is in Livy, XXIX 19, 21.

XVIII

In What Mode Faith Should Be Kept by Princes

How laudable it is for a prince to keep his faith, and to live with honesty and not by astuteness, everyone understands.

Nonetheless one sees by experience in our times that the princes who have done great things are those who have taken little account of faith and have known how to get around men's brains with their astuteness; and in the end they have overcome those who have founded themselves on loyalty.

Thus, you[1] must know that there are two kinds of combat: one with laws, the other with force. The first is proper to man, the second to beasts; but because the first is often not enough, one must have recourse to the second. Therefore it is necessary for a prince to know well how to use the beast and the man. This role was taught covertly to princes by ancient writers, who wrote that Achilles, and many other ancient princes, were given to Chiron the centaur to be raised, so that he would look after them with his discipline. To have as teacher a half-beast, half-man means nothing other than that a prince needs to know how to use both natures; and the one without the other is not lasting.

Thus, since a prince is compelled of necessity to know well how to use the beast, he should pick the fox and the lion,[2] because the lion does not defend itself from snares and the fox does not defend itself from wolves. So one needs to be a fox to recognize snares and a lion to frighten the wolves. Those who stay simply with the lion do not understand this. A prudent lord, therefore, cannot observe faith, nor should he, when such observance turns against him, and the causes that made him promise have been eliminated. And if all men were good, this teaching would not be good; but because they are wicked and do not observe faith with you, you also do not have to observe it with them. Nor does a prince ever lack legitimate causes to color his failure to observe faith. One could give infinite modern examples of this, and show how many peace treaties and promises have been rendered invalid and

1. The formal or plural you.
2. A possible source for this: Cicero, *De Officiis* I.11.34; 13.41.

vain through the infidelity of princes; and the one who has known best how to use the fox has come out best. But it is necessary to know well how to color this nature, and to be a great pretender and dissembler; and men are so simple and so obedient to present necessities that he who deceives will always find someone who will let himself be deceived.

I do not want to be silent about one of the recent examples. Alexander VI never did anything, nor ever thought of anything, but how to deceive men, and he always found a subject to whom he could do it. And there never was a man with greater efficacy in asserting a thing, and in affirming it with greater oaths, who observed it less; nonetheless, his deceits succeeded at his will, because he well knew this aspect of the world.

Thus, it is not necessary for a prince to have all the above-mentioned qualities in fact, but it is indeed necessary to appear to have them. Nay, I dare say this, that by having them and always observing them, they are harmful; and by appearing to have them, they are useful, as it is to appear merciful, faithful, humane, honest, and religious, and to be so; but to remain with a spirit built so that, if you need not to be those things, you are able and know how to change to the contrary. This has to be understood: that a prince, and especially a new prince, cannot observe all those things for which men are held good, since he is often under a necessity, to maintain his state, of acting against faith, against charity, against humanity, against religion. And so he needs to have a spirit disposed to change as the winds of fortune and variations of things command him, and as I said above, not depart from good, when possible, but know how to enter into evil, when forced by necessity.

A prince should thus take great care that nothing escape his mouth that is not full of the above-mentioned five qualities and that, to see him and hear him, he should appear all mercy, all faith, all honesty, all humanity, all religion. And nothing is more necessary to appear to have than this

last quality. Men in general[3] judge more by their eyes than by their hands, because seeing is given[4] to everyone, touching to few. Everyone sees how you appear, few touch what you are; and these few dare not oppose the opinion of many, who have the majesty of the state to defend them; and in the actions of all men, and especially of princes, where there is no court to appeal to, one looks to the end. So let a prince win and maintain his state: the means will always be judged honorable, and will be praised by everyone. For the vulgar are taken in by the appearance and the outcome of a thing, and in the world there is no one but the vulgar; the few have a place there[5] when the many have somewhere to lean on. A certain prince of present times, whom it is not well to name,[6] never preaches anything but peace and faith, and is very hostile to both. If he had observed both, he would have had either his reputation or his state taken from him many times.

3. lit.: universally.
4. lit.: touches.
5. One manuscript says "the few have no place there . . ."; and the authorities have divided, Casella, Russo, and Sasso accepting "no place," Chabod and Bertelli "a place."
6. Apparently Ferdinand the Catholic, whom NM unhesitatingly names in Chapter 21.

XIX

Of Avoiding Contempt and Hatred

But because I have spoken of the most important of the qualities mentioned above, I want to discourse on the others briefly under this generality, that the prince, as was said above in part, should think how to avoid those things that

make him hateful and contemptible. When he avoids them, he will have done his part and will find no danger in his other infamies. What makes him hated above all, as I said,[1] is to be rapacious and a usurper of the property and the women of his subjects. From these he must abstain, and whenever one does not take away either property or honor from the generality[2] of men, they live content and one has only to contend with the ambition of the few which may be checked in many modes and with ease. What makes him contemptible is to be held variable, light, effeminate, pusillanimous, irresolute, from which a prince should guard himself as from a shoal. He should contrive that greatness, spiritedness, gravity, and strength are recognized in his actions, and he should insist that his judgments in the private concerns of his subjects be irrevocable. And he should maintain such an opinion of himself that no one thinks either of deceiving him or of getting around him.

The prince who gives this opinion of himself is highly reputed, and against whoever is reputed it is difficult to conspire, difficult to mount an attack, provided it is understood that he is excellent and revered by his own subjects. For a prince should have two fears: one within, on account of his subjects; the other outside, on account of external powers. From the latter one is defended with good arms and good friends; and if one has good arms, one will always have good friends. And things inside will always remain steady, if things outside are steady, unless indeed they are disturbed by a conspiracy; and even if things outside are in motion, provided he has ordered and lived as I said, as long as he does not forsake himself he will always withstand every thrust, as I said Nabis the Spartan did.[3] But, as to

1. See Chapter 17 above.
2. lit.: universality.
3. Chapter 9 above, where Nabis is featured as a prince of a civil principality. NM does not disclose here, as he does in *Discourses on Livy* III 6, that Nabis was in fact killed by a conspiracy.

subjects, when things outside are not moving, one has to fear that they may be conspiring secretly. From this the prince may secure himself sufficiently if he avoids being hated or despised and keeps the people satisfied with him; this is necessary to achieve, as was said above at length.[4] And one of the most powerful remedies that a prince has against conspiracies is not to be hated by the people generally.[5] For whoever conspires always believes he will satisfy the people with the death of the prince, but when he believes he will offend them, he does not get up the spirit to adopt such a course, because the difficulties on the side of the conspirators are infinite. And one sees from experience that there have been many conspiracies, but few have had a good end. For whoever conspires cannot be alone, but he cannot find company except from those he believes to be malcontents; and as soon as you disclose your intent to a malcontent, you give him the matter with which to become content, because manifestly he can hope for every advantage from it. So, seeing sure gain on this side, and on the other, dubious gain full of danger, he must indeed either be a rare friend, or an altogether obstinate enemy of the prince, to keep his faith with you. And to reduce this to brief terms, I say that on the part of the conspirator there is nothing but fear, jealousy, and the terrifying anticipation of punishment; but on the part of the prince there is the majesty of the principality, the laws, the protection of friends and of the state which defend him, so that when popular good will is added to all these things, it is impossible that anyone should be so rash as to conspire. For whereas a conspirator ordinarily has to fear before the execution of the evil, in this case (having the people as enemies) he must fear afterwards too, when the excess has occurred, nor can he hope for any refuge.

4. Chapter 17.
5. lit.: by the universal.

One might give infinite examples of this matter, but I wish to be content with only one that happened within the memory of our fathers. Messer Annibale Bentivoglio, grandfather of the present Messer Annibale, who was prince in Bologna, was killed by the Canneschi conspiring against him, and no one survived him but Messer Giovanni, who was in swaddling clothes. Immediately after that homicide the people rose up and killed all the Canneschi. This came from the popular good will the house of Bentivoglio had in those times, which was so great that since there remained no one of that house in Bologna who could rule the state, Annibale being dead, and since there was indication that in Florence someone had been born of the Bentivogli who was considered until then the son of a blacksmith, the Bolognese came to Florence for him and gave him the government of their city, which was governed by him until Messer Giovanni reached an age suitable for governing.[6]

I conclude, therefore, that a prince should take little account of conspiracies if the people show good will to him; but if they are hostile and bear hatred for him, he should fear everything and everyone. And well-ordered states and wise princes have thought out with all diligence how not to make the great desperate and how to satisfy the people and keep them content, because this is one of the most important matters that concern a prince.

Among the well-ordered and governed kingdoms in our times is that of France;[7] and in it are infinite good institutions on which the liberty and security of the king depend. The first of these is the parlement and its authority. For the one who ordered that kingdom,[8] knowing the am-

6. See NM, *Florentine Histories* VI 9–10.

7. On the kingdom of France, see also *Discourses on Livy* I 16, 17, 55; and NM's *Ritratto di cose di Francia*.

8. Perhaps a reference to Louis IX, by whom the Parlement of Paris was organized out of the preceding king's court. Parlements in the French monarchy were law courts, not legislative assemblies.

bition of the powerful and their insolence, and judging it necessary for them to have a bit in their mouths to correct them, and on the other side, knowing the hatred of the generality of people[9] against the great, which is founded in its fear, and wanting to secure them, intended this not to be the particular concern of the king, so as to take from him the blame he would have from the great when he favored the popular side, and from the popular side when he favored the great; and so he constituted a third judge to be the one who would beat down the great and favor the lesser side without blame for the king. This order could not be better, or more prudent, or a greater cause of the security of the king and the kingdom. From this one can infer another notable thing: that princes should have anything blameable administered by others, favors[10] by themselves. Again I conclude that a prince should esteem the great, but not make himself hated by the people.

It might perhaps appear to many, considering the life and death of some Roman emperor, that there were examples contrary to my opinion, since one may find someone who has always lived excellently, and shown great virtue of spirit, and has nonetheless lost the empire or indeed been killed by his own subjects who conspired against him. Since I want, therefore, to respond to these objections, I shall discuss the qualities of certain emperors, showing the causes of their ruin to be not unlike that which I have advanced; and in part I shall offer for consideration things that are notable for whoever reads about the actions of those times. And I want it to suffice for me to take all the emperors who succeeded to the empire, from Marcus the philosopher to Maximinus: these were Marcus, Commodus his son, Pertinax, Julianus, Severus, his son Antoninus Caracalla, Macrinus, Heliogabalus, Alexander,[11] and Max-

9. lit.: of the universal.

10. lit.: things of grace.

11. Alexander Severus.