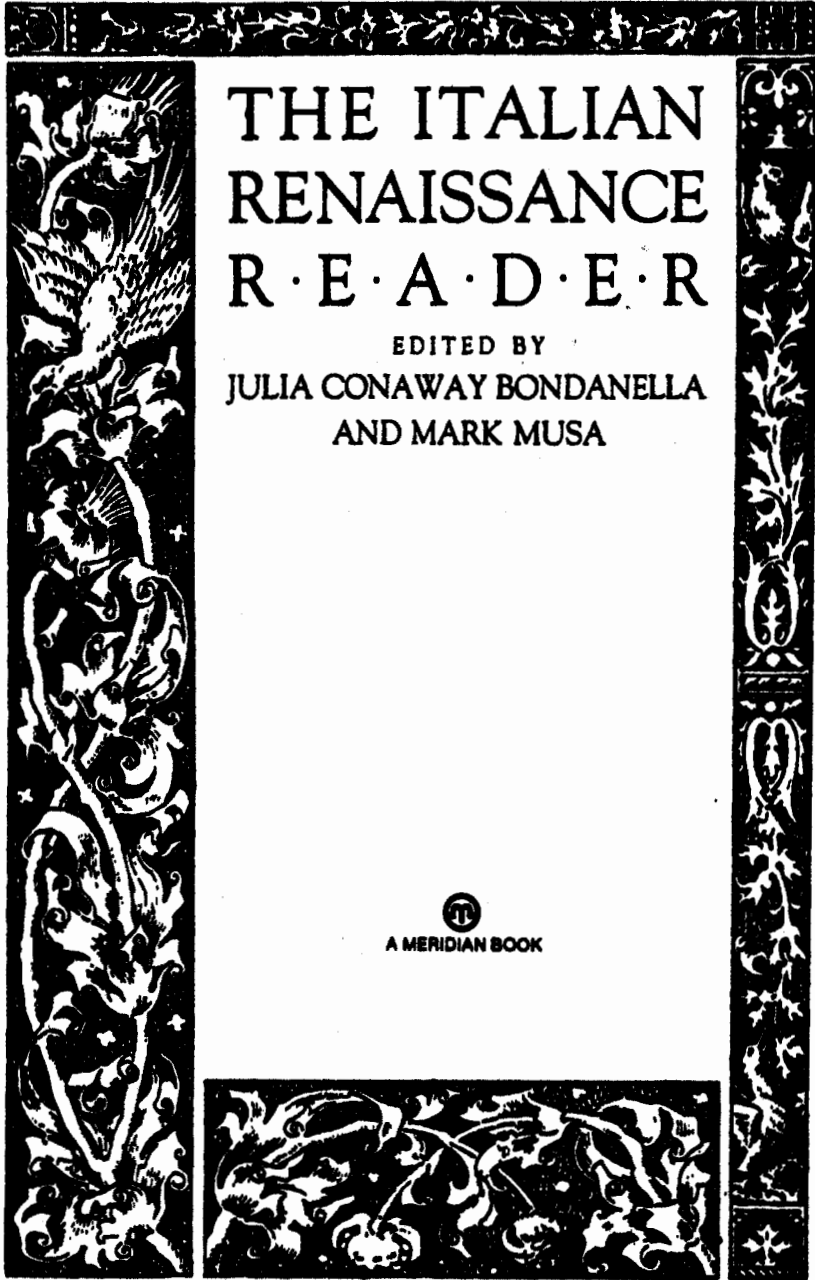




THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE R · E · A · D · E · R

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A MERIDIAN BOOK



NOTES

1. Leonardo seems to have planned a general treatise on painting and had a number of possible introductions in mind. Given the state of the extant manuscripts, the disorderly nature of Leonardo's original plan has been intensified by the loss or dispersal of many of his original manuscripts.

2. This passage, one of the possible introductions mentioned above in note 1, contains Leonardo's famous self-description as an unlettered (but not unlearned) man. Leonardo rejected the bookish science of the universities for the practical experience of personal observation.

3. Leonardo anticipates Francesco Guicciardini's attack upon the book learning of Renaissance thought. Whereas Leonardo rejects studying ancient classical scientific texts, since they obscure our perception of the natural world around us (and are often simply incorrect), Guicciardini (see selections in the anthology) will reject abstract, bookish political schemes (like those of his friend Machiavelli) in favor of practical experience in government.

4. Leonardo's own skill as a painter was due, in large measure, to his incomparable gift of noticing the details of every object or body contained in his paintings or sketches.

5. In this fragment, Leonardo anticipates the theory of the development of Italian art in the Renaissance usually associated with Giorgio Vasari's *Lives of the Artists*. However, he stresses the fact that Giotto and Masaccio imitated nature, not their predecessors.

6. Leonardo left Florence in 1481 and went to Milan, then ruled by the dashing Ludovico Sforza (known as "Il Moro," 1451-1508), who was the virtuous ruler of Milan, since his nephew and the heir to the city's rule, Gian Galeazzo Sforza, was only thirteen years old. Ludovico needed an architect and military engineer as much as he required an artist, and Leonardo's letter of presentation to him stresses his many practical talents. The bronze horse mentioned was to be an equestrian monument to commemorate Ludovico's father, Francesco Sforza (1401-66), sixth Duke of Milan. The extant manuscript of this letter is not in Leonardo's hand and may have been only a draft.

7. Mangonels and trabocchi are technical terms for different kinds of military catapults or mortars frequently employed in Leonardo's time in besieging a city or fortress.

BALDESAR CASTIGLIONE

1478-1529

A MANTUAN COURTIER, DIPLOMAT, WRITER ON COURTESY AND MANNERS, and occasional poet, Castiglione spent his early years in his native city before being sent to the court of Ludovico "il Moro" in Milan in 1492 to finish his training. There, in the company of humanists and artists such as Bramante and Leonardo da Vinci, Castiglione polished his education. With the fall of Milan to the French in 1499, Castiglione first tried unsuccessfully to obtain a place at the Gonzaga court in Mantua; then in 1504 he was permitted to enter the service of Guidobaldo di Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino, and he served this court from 1504 to 1513, under both Guidobaldo and his successor, Francesco Maria della Rovere. Because Francesco Maria was the nephew of Pope Julius II, Castiglione was often sent to Rome on diplomatic missions for the Duchy of Urbino. In Rome, he developed close friendships with Raphael and a number of humanists at the Roman court. In 1524, Castiglione was made papal nuncio to the Spanish court of Charles V, but his last years were unhappy ones, particularly since the sack of Rome in 1527 by troops of Charles V caused some of Castiglione's enemies to accuse him of having failed to warn Pope Clement VII of this impending disaster. Castiglione died in Spain only a year after he had been made Bishop of Avila.

The *Book of the Courtier* first appeared in a final version in 1528, although shorter versions were published earlier. The book presents the ideal portrait of the perfect courtier, a figure inspired by humanism as well as chivalric ideals from the past. It is written in the form of a dialogue, a literary genre that became popular in the Renaissance in imitation of works by Cicero or Plato. In this relatively informal literary form, moreover, Castiglione's readers could also catch a glimpse of the type of ideal court (supposedly that of Urbino in March 1507) to which they were supposed to aspire.

The European reputation of the *Book of the Courtier* would be difficult to minimize. Along with Machiavelli's portrait of the ideal political leader in *The Prince*, with which it has a number of affinities, it

BALDESAR CASTIGLIONE

became one of the most popular books in the Renaissance period, read by almost every educated individual and translated into a number of languages. While naive readers saw in it only a handbook of manners, most astute readers of Castiglione would find in his pages an engaging analysis of the dialectic between reality and appearance that would fascinate readers of Machiavelli as well.

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SELECTIONS FROM THE BOOK OF THE COURTIER

To the Reverend and Illustrious Don Miguel da Silva, Bishop of Viseo¹

1. When Signor Guidobaldo of Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino, departed from this life, I together with some other noblemen who had served him remained in the service of Duke Francesco Maria della Rovere, his heir and successor in the state;² and as the reminiscence of his virtue was fresh in my mind as well as the satisfaction that I had felt during those years spent in the loving company of such excellent people as then happened to be present at the court of Urbino, I was moved by the memory of it to write this book of *The Courtier*, which I did in a few days, with the intention of correcting in the course of time those errors which arose from my desire to repay this debt quickly. But for many years now, fortune has continuously kept me overburdened with such constant toil that I could never find the time to bring these books to the point that my feeble judgment was satisfied with them.

Then finding myself in Spain and being informed by someone in Italy that Signora Vittoria della Colonnna, Marchioness of Pescara,³ to whom I had already presented a copy of the book, had, contrary to her promises, allowed a large part of it to be transcribed, I could not help feeling somewhat annoyed, fearing the many problems that might well arise in such cases. Nonetheless, I trusted that the wisdom and prudence of that lady, whose virtue I have always admired as something divine, would suffice to prevent any harm from happening to me for having obeyed her commands. In the end I found out that many people in Naples already had that part of the book, and as men are always eager for new things, it seemed that some of these people were trying to have it printed. Wherefore, frightened by this danger, I decided to revise very quickly the small part of the book that time would allow with the intention of publishing it, judging it less harmful to let it be seen slightly corrected by my hand than greatly mutilated by the hands of others.

Thus, to carry out this decision, I began to reread it, and immedi-

ately, because of its title, I was seized by an uncommon sadness, which increased considerably as I read along and remembered that most of those introduced in the discussions were already dead, for, besides those who are mentioned in the preface to the last book, even Alfonso Ariosto,⁴ to whom the book is dedicated, is dead—an affable young man, discreet, well mannered, and able in all that befits a man who lives at court. Likewise, Duke Giuliano de' Medici,⁵ whose goodness and noble courtesies deserved to be enjoyed a little longer by the rest of the world. Messer Bernardo, Cardinal of Santa Maria in Portico,⁶ who charmed anyone who met him with a sharp, pleasing, and ready wit, too, is dead. Also dead is Signor Ottaviano Fregoso,⁷ a man most rare in our times, magnanimous, religious, full of goodness, wit, prudence, and courtesy, and truly a friend of honor and virtue and so worthy of esteem that even his enemies were forced to praise him; and those misfortunes that he endured with the greatest constancy were indeed enough to prove that Fortune is, as she always was, even today, the enemy of virtue. Also dead are many others named in the book, to whom nature seemed to promise a very long life. But what should not be recounted without tears is that our lady, the Duchess, is dead as well, and if my mind is troubled over the loss of so many friends and lords who have left me behind in this life of solitude so full of sorrows, it is understandable that I feel far more sorrowful over the death of the Duchess⁸ than over those of any of the others, because she was more worthy than all the others, and I was much more obligated to her than to any of them. In order, therefore, not to delay in repaying what I owe to the memory of such an excellent lady as well as the others who no longer live, and prompted also by the threat to my book, I have had it printed and published in such a fashion as the brevity of time has allowed.

And because you had no knowledge of either the Duchess or the others while they were alive (except for Duke Giuliano and the Cardinal of Santa Maria in Portico), in order to acquaint you with them, insofar as I can, after their death, I am sending you this book as a portrait of the court of Urbino, not by the hand of Raphael or Michelangelo, but by that of a lowly man who is capable only of sketching the main lines, without adorning the truth with beautiful colors or making, by means of the art of perspective, what truly is appear to be what it is not. And although I have tried to show with these discussions the qualities and conditions of those who are named herein, I confess that I have not even hinted at, let alone expressed, the virtues of the Duchess, because not only is my style insufficient to express them, but my mind cannot even conceive of them; and if I am censured for this or any other thing worthy

of blame (and well do I know that many such things are not lacking in this book), I shall not be contradicting the truth. . . .

3. Others say that since it is so difficult and almost impossible to find a man as perfect as I wish the courtier to be, it is a waste of time to write of him, because it is futile to teach what cannot be learned. To such persons I answer (putting aside any debate about the Intelligible World or Ideas) that I will be content to have erred with Plato, Xenophon, and Cicero, and just as, according to the opinion of these writers, there is the idea of the perfect republic, the perfect king, and the perfect orator, so likewise there is also that of the perfect courtier.⁹ And if I have not been able to approximate the image of the latter with my style, then courtiers will find it far less difficult to approximate with their deeds the end and goal I have proposed for them in this book I have written, and if, for all that, they cannot attain the perfection, such as it is, that they have tried to express, the one who comes nearest to it will be the most perfect, just as when many archers shoot at a target and none of them hits the bull's-eye, the one who comes closest to it is, without a doubt, better than the others. There are still others who say that I, using myself as a model, have convinced myself that the qualities I attribute to the courtier are all in me. To such people, I will not deny having attempted to describe all that I would want the courtier to know—and I think that anyone who did not have some knowledge of the things discussed in the book, however erudite he may be, could hardly have written about them—but I am not so lacking in judgment and self-knowledge as to presume to know all that I would wish to know.

Thus, for the present I leave the defense against these accusations, and perhaps against many others, to the consensus of public opinion, because most of the time, the majority, even though lacking perfect knowledge, have instinctively a natural sense for what is good and bad, and without being able to explain why, they enjoy and love one thing while they reject and hate another. Hence, if the book is generally pleasing, I shall take it to be good, and I shall think that it is to survive; if, once again, it does not please, I will take it to be bad and at once believe that it is to be forgotten. And if my accusers are not yet satisfied with this public judgment, then let them be content at least with that of time, which, in the end, reveals the hidden defects of all things, and, by being the father of truth and an impartial judge, is inclined to pronounce a just sentence of life or death on all writing.

Book I

[At the beginning of Book I, Castiglione announces that the book follows classical tradition in the way it recounts what the author was told of the discussion that took place at the court of Urbino.]

2. On the slopes of the Apennines, almost in the center of Italy and toward the Adriatic Sea, sits, as everyone knows, the little city of Urbino, and although it lies among hills which are not, perhaps, as pleasant as some we see in many other places, still Heaven has so greatly favored it that the countryside all around is most fertile and productive, so that, besides the healthiness of the air, everything necessary for human life is found there in abundance. But among the greatest sources of happiness that can be attributed to it, I believe this to be the chief one: that for so long a time, it has always been ruled by the best lords, although it was for a time deprived of them during the universal calamity of the wars in Italy. But without looking any further, we can bear witness to the glorious memory of Duke Federico,¹⁰ who, in his day, was the light of Italy; nor are there lacking numerous and reliable witnesses still living who can testify to his prudence, humanity, justice, liberality, his unconquerable soul, and his military discipline, the principal proof of which lies in his many victories, the capture by siege of impregnable places, the instant readiness of his expeditions, the many times he routed large and very powerful armies with few men, and the fact that he was never the loser in any battle; so that not without reason may we compare him to many famous men of ancient times. This man, among his other praiseworthy deeds, built on the rugged site of Urbino a palace which is according to many, the most beautiful to be found in all of Italy, and he furnished it not only with what was ordinarily in fashion, such as silver vases, hangings in the richest cloth of gold, silk and other such fabrics, but for decoration he added an infinite number of ancient statues of marble and bronze, unique paintings, and musical instruments of every sort; nor did he want anything there that was not the rarest and most excellent of quality. Then, at very great expense, he collected a large number of the most excellent and rare books in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, all of which he adorned with gold and silver, considering them to be the supreme excellence of his magnificent palace.

3. Following the natural course of things, this man, who was already sixty-five years old, died as gloriously as he had lived, leaving as his heir his only male child, who was a boy of ten without a mother—that is, Guidobaldo. This boy appeared to be heir to all his father's virtues as well as to his state, and immediately his wondrous nature began to promise so much more than seemed possible to expect from any mortal; so men judged none of Duke Federico's other noteworthy deeds to be greater than having fathered such a son. But Fortune, jealous of such worth, set herself against this glorious beginning with all her might, so that before Duke Guido reached the age of twenty, he fell ill with the gout, which, growing worse with atrocious pains, so crippled all his members that in a short time he could not stand on his feet or move by himself. Thus, one of the fairest and most well-proportioned bodies in the world was deformed and ruined in the flower of its youth. And still not content with this, Fortune opposed him so in his every undertaking that only on rare occasions did he succeed in realizing what he wished to do; and although he was very wise in council and his soul indomitable, it seemed that anything he undertook to do, great or small, dealing with arms or otherwise, always ended in failure. This is attested to by his many and diverse calamities, all of which he always bore with such great strength of mind that his spirit was never overcome by Fortune. On the contrary, scorning her tempests with valiant courage, he lived in sickness as if in health and in adversity as if in great good fortune, with dignity and the esteem of all; so that though infirm in body as he was, he served on the most honorable terms with the Serene Highnesses Kings Alfonso¹¹ and Ferdinand the Younger¹² of Naples, and later with Pope Alexander VI,¹³ as well as the Venetian and Florentine lords. Once Julius¹⁴ ascended to the papacy, he was made Captain of the Church and, at that time, following his usual style, he managed, above all, to fill his house with very noble and talented gentlemen, with whom he lived on the most familiar terms, finding pleasure in their company, in which the pleasure he gave others was not less than he received from them, being so learned in Latin and Greek and combining affability and charm with the knowledge of so vast a number of things. Besides this, so much did his greatness of soul spur him on that even though he could not personally perform deeds of chivalry as he had formerly done, he still took the greatest pleasure in seeing them performed by others; and by his words, now criticizing, now praising each man according to his merits, he clearly demonstrated how much judgment he had in these matters. As a result, in jousts, tournaments, riding, handling of all kinds of arms, as well as in festivals, games, musical performances, in short, in all the

exercises befitting noble cavaliers, everyone tried to prove himself deserving of being judged worthy of such noble company as his.

4. All the hours of the day, therefore, were divided among honorable and pleasant exercises both of the body and the mind, but because, owing to his infirmity, the Duke usually went to sleep quite early after supper, everyone usually repaired to wherever the Duchess Elisabetta Gonzaga was at that hour and where Signora Emilia Pia¹⁵ was also to be found, who, being endowed with such lively wit and judgment, as you know, seemed the mistress of all, and all seemed to take on wisdom and worth from her. Here, then, courteous discussions and honest witticisms were heard, and on everyone's face a joyous good humor was seen displayed, so much so that this house could be called the very abode of gaiety; nor do I believe that the sweetness derived from dear and beloved company could be enjoyed more in any other place than it once was there, for, leaving aside how great an honor it was for each of us to serve such a lord as the one I have described, we all felt enormous pleasure arise within our hearts whenever we came into the presence of the Duchess. And it seemed that this was a chain that held all of us united in love in such a way that never was there more harmony of will or cordial friendship among brothers than that which prevailed among all of us there.

The same was true among the ladies with whom one had the most free and honest relationships, for each of us was permitted to talk, sit, joke, and laugh with anyone he pleased, but so great was the reverence felt for the wishes of the Duchess, that this same liberty was also a great restraint, nor was there anyone who did not judge it to be the greatest pleasure in the world to be able to please her and the greatest pain to displease her. For this reason, the most decorous of customs were joined there with the greatest of liberty, and games and laughter in her presence were seasoned not only with witty jests but with a gracious and stern dignity; for that modesty and grandeur which regulated all the actions, words, and gestures of the Duchess, in jest and laughter, caused even someone who had never seen her before to recognize her as a very great lady. And thus in making an impression on those around her, it seemed that she tempered all to her own image and quality, so that everyone tried to imitate her style, deriving, as it were, a standard of fine behavior from the presence of so virtuous a lady, whose best qualities I do not intend to narrate at this point, this not being my aim, since they are quite well known to all the world and much more than I could express either with my tongue or my pen; and those which may have remained somewhat concealed, Fortune, as if the admirer of such rare virtues

decided to reveal through many adversities and the sting of misfortune in order to demonstrate that in the tender breast of a woman accompanied by singular beauty, there may exist prudence and strength of spirit and all those virtues that even in the sternest of men are most rare.

5. But leaving this aside, let me say that the custom of all the gentlemen of the house was to go immediately after dinner to the Duchess, where, amid the pleasing festivities and the music and dancing which were customary, excellent topics for discussion were often proposed and sometimes ingenious games (now at the request of one, now of another) in which, under various pretexts, those present revealed their thoughts allegorically to whomever they wished. Sometimes other debates would arise on various topics or there would be a sharp exchange of witty retorts; and often they made up "emblems," as we call them today. And great pleasure was taken in such marvelous discussions, the house being full, as I have said, of the most noble talents, among which, as you know, the most celebrated were Signor Ottaviano Fregoso; Messer Federico, his brother;¹⁶ the Magnifico Giuliano de' Medici; Messer Pietro Bembo;¹⁷ Messer Cesare Gonzaga;¹⁸ Count Ludovico da Canossa;¹⁹ Signor Gaspar Pallavicino;²⁰ Signor Ludovico Pio;²¹ Signor Morello da Ortona;²² Pietro da Napoli;²³ Messer Roberto da Bari;²⁴ and countless other very noble gentlemen. Besides these, there were many others who, although they did not, as a rule, remain there permanently, spent most of their time there, such as Messer Bernardo Bibbiena; the Unico Aretino;²⁵ Giancristoforo Romano;²⁶ Pietro Monte;²⁷ Terpandro;²⁸ and Messer Niccolò Frisio.²⁹ So that there was always to be found gathered there at court agreeable men and the finest kind of every talent to be found in Italy.³⁰

* * *

[The arrival of Pope Julius II and his entourage provides the pretext for the discussions recorded in Book I of *The Courtier*.]

6. . . . Thus, the day after the departure of the Pope, the company had retired at the usual hour to the customary place, and the Duchess, after much pleasant discussion, wished for Signora Emilia to begin the games; and she, after having declined the task several times, spoke as follows: "Madam, since it is your wish for me to be the one to begin the games for this evening, and since I cannot rightly fail to obey you, I have decided to propose a game for which I think I shall have little blame and even less work; and this will be for everyone to propose a game according to his own liking that has not yet been played; and then we will choose the one which seems most worthy of being played in this company."

And speaking thus, she turned to Signor Gaspar Pallavicino, en-

joining him to tell his choice, and he immediately replied: "It is for you, Madam, to tell yours first."

Signora Emilia said: "I have already told it to you, but now you, Duchess, bid him to obey."

Then the Duchess said, laughing: "So that everyone will be bound to obey you, I make you my deputy, and give you all my authority."

* * *

[The group considers and rejects a number of suggested pastimes.]

12. Everyone was waiting for Signora Emilia's answer; without saying a word to Bembo, she turned to Federico Fregoso and asked him to suggest his game, and he immediately began in this fashion: "Signora, I would like to be allowed, as sometimes happens, to submit to someone else's judgment, since I, for one, will approve with pleasure any of the games proposed by these gentlemen, because truly it seems to me that all of them would be amusing; still, so as not to break the rules of the game, I will say that whoever wishes to praise our court—apart from the merits of our Duchess, which alone with her divine virtue would be enough to lift the basest souls in the world from earth to heaven—might well say, without any suspicion of flattery, that in all of Italy, it would be difficult to find an equal number of cavaliers as distinguished and as excellent in a variety of things beyond their principal profession of chivalry as are found here; on that account, if in any place there are men who deserve to be called good courtiers and who know how to judge what belongs to the perfection of courtiership, it is only right to think that they are here present. So then, in order to silence those many fools, who through their presumptuousness and ineptitude believe they can acquire the name of good courtiers, I would like our game for this evening to be this—that one of this company be elected and to this person be given the task of forming with words a perfect courtier, describing all the conditions and special qualities that are required of anyone who deserves this name; and that everyone be allowed to contradict those things which do not seem appropriate to him, just as in the schools of the philosophers it is permitted to raise objections to anyone maintaining a thesis."

Messer Federico was continuing with his discourse, when Signora Emilia, interrupting him, said: "This, if it pleases the Duchess, will be our game for now."

The Duchess answered: "I am pleased."

Then nearly all of those present began to say, both to the Duchess and among themselves, that this was the finest game that could be played; and without waiting for each other's answers, they all pressed

Signora Emilia to decide who should be the one to begin. Turning to the Duchess, she said: "Madam, will you command the one who pleases you most to assume this task, for I do not wish, through choosing one rather than another, to appear to decide which person I judge more capable than the others in this matter, and in so doing offend anyone."

The Duchess replied: "Please make the choice yourself, and take care not to set an example for the others by disobeying, so that they are even less obedient."

13. Then Signora Emilia, laughing, said to Count Ludovico da Canossa: "In order, therefore, not to lose more time, you, Count, will be the one to take on this task in the way Messer Federico has said; and certainly not because we think that you are so good a courtier that you know what befits one, but because, if you say anything to the contrary, as we hope you will do, the game will be all the more amusing, because everyone will have something to which he may respond; whereas, if another who has more knowledge than you had this task, nothing that he said could be contradicted, because he would speak the truth, and thus the game would be tedious."

The Count answered at once: "Signora, there could be no danger that opposition would be lacking against whoever tells the truth, so long as you are present here," and once everyone had laughed awhile at his repartee, he went on: "But truly, milady, I would most willingly escape this task, since it seems too difficult for me, and I well know to be true what you have in jest said of me; namely, that I do not know what befits a good courtier. And I do not seek to prove this by any other testimony than by the fact that since I do not act like a good courtier, it can be judged that I have no knowledge of the subject; hence, I believe that I am less blameworthy, since, without a doubt, it is worse not to wish to act well than not to know how to do so. Still, since it so pleases you that I undertake this charge, I cannot, nor do I wish to, refuse it, so as not to contravene our regulations or your judgment, which I value far more than my own."

Then Messer Cesare Gonzaga said: "Since it is already rather late, and we have many other kinds of amusements at hand, perhaps we would do well to postpone this discussion until tomorrow and give the Count time to think about what he is going to say, for, truly, it is a difficult thing to improvise on such a subject."

The Count replied: "I do not wish to be like the man who having stripped down to his doublet, jumped less far than he had with his cloak on. And so, as far as I am concerned, it is fortunate that the hour is so

late, because due to the brevity of time, I shall be forced to say very little, and not having given this matter any thought, I will be excused and allowed to say, without censure, anything that comes to my mind. Therefore, in order not to bear this burden of obligation on my shoulders any longer, let me say that in all things it is so difficult to know what true perfection is that it is nearly impossible, and this is due to the diversity of our opinions. Thus, there are many who welcome a man who talks a great deal, and they will call him pleasing; some will prefer a more modest man; others an active and restless man; still others someone who shows calm and deliberation; and so everyone praises or blames according to his own opinion, always hiding a vice with the name of the corresponding virtue, or a virtue with the name of the corresponding vice; for example, calling an arrogant man frank, a modest man uninteresting, a simple-minded man good, a rascal discreet, and so on and so forth. Yet, do think that there is perfection for everything, even though it be hidden, and that this perfection can be revealed with reasonable arguments by someone who has knowledge of the subject. And because, as I have said, the truth often remains hidden and I cannot boast of having this knowledge, I can only praise the sort of courtier I most value and approve to what seems to my weak judgment to be closest to the truth, and you may follow my judgment if it seems good to you, or you may well hold to your own, if it differs from mine. Nor will I contend that mine is better than yours, for not only can you think one thing and I another, but I myself may sometimes think one thing and sometimes another.

14. "And so, I would want our courtier to be of noble birth and good family, because it matters much less for the common man if he fails to perform virtuously than for a nobleman, who, should he stray from the path of his ancestors, stains the family name and not only fails to achieve anything but loses what has already been achieved. For nobility is like a bright lamp which makes manifest and visible both good deeds and bad ones, kindling and spurring on to virtue as much for fear of infamy as for hope of praise; and since the deeds of the common men do not show forth such noble brilliance, they lack both that stimulus and that fear of dishonor, nor do they feel obligated to go beyond what their ancestors have done, while to the nobles it seems blameworthy not to attain at least the standard set them by their forebears. Thus, in general, both in arms and in other virtuous actions, those who are most distinguished are of noble birth, because Nature has implanted in all things that hidden seed which gives a certain strength and quality of its own essence to what arises from it, making it similar to itself—as we see not only in breeds of horses and other animals, but also in trees, the shoots of which

almost always resemble the trunk; and if they sometimes degenerate, the fault lies with the bad farmer. And so it happens with men, who, if they are cultivated and well raised, are nearly always similar to those from whom they come, and often they are better; but if they lack someone to look after them properly, they become wild and never attain their full growth. It is true that be it through the goodwill of the stars or Nature, some are born endowed with so many graces that it seems that they were not born at all but rather that some god, with his own hands, fashioned and adorned them with all the graces of mind and body; similarly, there are as many to be found who are so inept and crude that it is hard not to conclude that Nature brought them into the world simply out of spite and mockery. Just as the latter, usually, will bear little fruit even with unending diligence and good training, so the former with minimal effort arrive at the summit of excellence.

"And to give you an example, see Signor Don Ippolito d'Este, Cardinal of Ferrara,³¹ who was accompanied at birth with so many good qualities that this person, his appearance, his words, and all his movements are so much in conformity with this grace of his that although he is young, he carries among the most venerable prelates such a grave authority that he seems more ready to teach than needful of learning. Likewise, in conversing with men and women of every sort, in play, in laughter, and in jest, he possesses a certain sweetness and such gracious manners that it is inevitable that anyone who speaks with him or even lays eyes on him becomes eternally fond of him.

"But returning to our subject, I say that between this excellent grace and that senseless stupidity, a means can be found; and those who are not so perfectly endowed by nature can with study and hard work polish and, in great part, correct their natural defects. So then, besides being of noble birth, I should like the courtier to be fortunate in this respect, too, and to receive from Nature not only the talent and beauty of person and face but also that certain grace which we call an 'air' that will make him immediately agreeable and charming to whoever sees him; and let this be an adornment which harmonizes with and accompanies all his actions, giving the promise from his outward appearance of being someone worthy of the company and favor of every great lord."

15. Then, without waiting any longer, Signor Gaspar Pallavicino said: "So that our game may have the prescribed form and that it will not appear that we have so little esteem for the authority given us to oppose what is set forth, let me say that to me this nobility of birth does not seem all that necessary in the courtier; and if I thought I were saying something new to any of us, I would cite numerous examples of people

born with noble blood, who are full of vices, and, on the contrary, many lowborn individuals who have made their posterity illustrious through their virtue. And if what you said just now is true, that is, that there is in all things that hidden force of the first seed, then we should all be of the same condition by reason of having had the same origin, nor would one person be more noble than another. But I believe that there are many other causes for our diversity and the degrees of elevation and lowliness, among which I judge Fortune to be the chief one, because over all the things of this world, we see her hold sway and, as it seems, amuse herself in often raising to the heavens someone who seems to be without merit and in burying in the depths those most worthy of being exalted. I can attest to what you say about the happiness of those who are endowed at birth with blessings of the mind and body, but this we find in the humble as well as the noble, because Nature does not make such subtle distinctions; rather, as I have said, often the loftiest gifts of Nature can be seen in the most humble persons. Therefore, since this nobility is acquired neither by talent nor by strength or skill, and more often results from the merits of our ancestors than from our own, it seems to me most strange to insist that if the parents of our courtier are of humble birth, then all his good qualities are ruined, and that those other qualities you have named would not quite suffice to bring him to the height of perfection; these qualities being talent, beauty of countenance, personal appearance, and the grace which will make him at first sight most pleasing to everyone."

16. Then Count Ludovico replied: "I do not deny that these same virtues can rule in the man of low birth as in the man of noble family, but in order not to repeat what we have already said along with many other arguments which might be advanced in praise of nobility, which is always honored by everyone, because it stands to reason that good should be born from good, and since it is our purpose to create a courtier who has no defects whatsoever and possesses all that is praiseworthy, I feel it is necessary to have him be of noble birth, not only for many other reasons but also for public approval, which immediately sides with nobility. For, given that there are two courtiers, who have not previously given any impression of themselves through either good deeds or bad, no sooner than the one is understood to have been born a gentleman and the other not, the one who is lowborn will be much less valued by everyone than the noble, and will need much more time and greater effort to impress upon the minds of men the good opinion of himself that the other will have given in an instant and solely by being a gentleman. And everyone can easily comprehend how important these impressions

are, for, to speak of ourselves, we have seen men arrive at this house who, though rather stupid and very awkward, have had the reputation throughout Italy of being great courtiers; and although they were in the end found out, they still deceived us for many days and maintained in our minds that opinion of themselves which they already found imprinted there, even though they behaved in accordance with their little worth. We have also seen others who at first enjoyed little esteem, and who, in the end, succeeded brilliantly.

"And the causes of these errors are diverse, including the obstinacy of lords, who, in the hope of achieving miracles, sometimes resolve to show favor to someone who seems to them to deserve disfavor. And then again they too are often deceived, but since princes always have countless imitators, their favor produces a great fame which, for the most part, our judgments will normally follow. And if we discover something which seems contrary to common opinion, we fear we must be deceiving ourselves and we always expect a revelation of sorts, because we think that such universal opinions must somehow be founded on the truth and arise from reasonable causes; moreover, our minds are very quick to love and hate, as can be seen in the public combats or games or in any other sort of competition, where the spectators for no obvious reason will often become fond of one of the parties, showing the greatest desire that his choice should win and the other lose. Then, as for the general opinion concerning a man's qualities, it is good or ill repute that moves our minds to one of these two passions. Hence, it happens that, for the most part, we judge on the basis of love or hate. So you see, then, how important this first impression is, and how anyone who wishes to win the rank and name of a good courtier must strive from the start to make a favorable impression on princes.

17. "But to come to some particulars, I believe that the principal and true profession of the courtier must be that of arms, which, above all, I would have him exercise with passion; and also let him stand out from all the rest as being bold and valiant and faithful to whomever he serves. And the fame of these good qualities will be acquired by exercising them whenever and wherever possible, inasmuch as failure to do so will incur the greatest blame. And just as among women chastity, once sullied, is never restored, so the fame of a gentleman who bears arms, if ever in the slightest way he sullies himself through cowardice or some other disgrace, always remains contemptible to the world and full of ignominy. Therefore, the more our courtier excels in this art, the more worthy of praise he will be, although I do not think it necessary for him to have the perfect professional knowledge of things and the other

qualities that are appropriate to a military leader. However, since the subject of what makes a great captain might put us on too rough a sea, we shall be content for the courtier to show complete loyalty and undaunted spirit and for him always to be seen to have these qualities. For often a man's courage is known from small things rather than from great ones. And often in the face of grave dangers, and where there are many witnesses, there are some men who, although their heart may stop dead out of fear, still spurred on by the fear of shame or the company present, press forward with eyes shut, as it were, and do their duty, God knows how; and in things that matter little and where it seems they can avoid putting themselves in danger without being observed, they happily allow themselves to settle for what is safe. But those men who, even when they think they will not be observed, or seen, or recognized by anyone, show courage and avoid nothing, however slight, for which they could be blamed, have that quality of spirit that we are seeking in our courtier.

"We do not, however, want him to make a show of being so fierce that he is forever boasting of what he has done, declaring that he has taken his cuirass for his wife, and threatening with such fierce looks as we have often seen Berto³² do, for to such as these one may say what a clever lady in noble company jokingly once said to a certain man (whom I do not now want to name), whom she invited to dance in order to honor him, and who not only refused her offer but who would not even listen to music or take part in the many other entertainments offered him, declaring all along that such frivolous things were not his business. And when, at length, the lady asked him, 'What then is your business?' he answered with a scowl, 'Combat.' The lady replied at once: 'Well, I should think it a good thing now that since you are not away at war or engaged in fighting at the moment, you have yourself well greased and, together with all your armor, put back into storage in some closet, so that you will not grow any rustier than you already are!' And thus, with great laughter among those present, she ridiculed him in his stupid presumption. Therefore, the man we are seeking should be extremely fierce, harsh, and always among the first wherever the enemy is seen, and everywhere else he should be humane, modest, and reserved, fleeing above all, ostentation, and the impudent praise of himself, by which a man always arouses hatred and disgust in whoever hears him."

18. "And I," replied Signor Gasparo, "I have known few men who are excellent in anything whatsoever who do not praise themselves, and it seems to me that it is only right that they be permitted to do so because anyone who feels himself to be of some worth and sees that his

deeds are ignored is offended that his own worth is buried, and he cannot help disclosing it in some way lest he feel cheated of the honor that is the true reward of virtuous labors. Thus, among the ancient writers, rarely does someone of great worth abstain from praising himself. Those who praise themselves even though they lack merit really are intolerable, but we do not presume that our courtier will be of that type."

Then the Count said: "If you noticed, I blamed extravagant and indiscriminate praise of oneself, but certainly, as you say, one must not have a bad opinion of a worthy man who praises himself modestly; on the contrary, one must accept it as better evidence than if it came from another's mouth. What I am saying, then, is that whoever praises himself in a correct manner and in doing so does not generate annoyance or envy in those who hear him is, indeed, a discreet man, and he deserves the praise of others besides the praise he gives himself, because this is a very difficult matter."

Then Signor Gasparo said: "This you have to teach us."

The Count answered: "Among the ancient writers, there is no lack of those who taught this, but in my opinion it all depends on saying things in such a way that it does not seem they are spoken with that end in mind, but are rather so appropriate that one cannot help saying them, and on always giving the impression of avoiding self-praise while practicing it—but not in the manner of those braggarts who open their mouths and let the words pour out at random. As one of our friends did the other day who when, after he had his thigh run through by a lance in Pisa, he said that he thought a fly had bitten him; and another who said that he did not keep a mirror in his room because when he got angry his appearance became so frightful that seeing himself in the mirror he would frighten himself to death."

Everyone laughed at this point, but Messer Cesare Gonzaga added: "What are you laughing at? Do you not know that Alexander the Great, upon hearing a certain philosopher's opinion that there were countless other worlds, began to weep, and when asked why, responded: 'Because I have not yet conquered even one'—as if he had had the intention of taking them all? Does it not seem to you that this is even a greater boast than the one about the fly's bite?"

Then the Count said: "And Alexander was a greater man than the one who mentioned the fly. But truly one has to pardon excellent men when they presume too much about themselves, because a man who must achieve great things must himself have the courage to do them and must have confidence in himself. And he should not be abject or cowardly but modest, rather, in his words, demonstrating that he pre-

sumes less of himself than he accomplishes, provided that such presumption does not turn into foolhardiness."

19. Then the Count paused briefly, and Messer Bernardo Bibbiena said, laughing: "I remember you said a short time ago that this courtier of ours should be naturally endowed with a beautiful face and person and with a kind of grace which makes him attractive. As for grace and beauty of face, I am quite certain I have it, and it is for that reason so many ladies, as you know, love me madly; but when it comes to the beauty of my person, I am rather doubtful, especially these legs of mine, which in truth do not seem to me as suitable as I would wish; I remain, however, quite content with my chest and the rest. So please explain a little more in detail what shape of body one should have, so that I can extricate myself from this doubt and put my mind at ease."

After some laughter at this, the Count added: "Certainly that grace of countenance you can honestly be said to possess, nor will I adduce any other example than this one to make clear what that grace is, because without a doubt we do see that your aspect is very agreeable and pleasing to everyone, even if your features are not very delicate—but then again, there is something both virile and graceful about it; and this is a quality found in many different types of faces. And I want the appearance of our courtier to be of this sort, not so soft and feminine as many try to have, who not only curl their hair and pluck their eyebrows, but dress themselves in those ways that the most lascivious and shameful women of the world adopt. They appear so tender and languid in the way they walk, stand, and in all their gestures that their limbs seem about to fall off, and they pronounce their words so limply that it seems they are about to expire on the spot, and the more they find themselves with men of standing, the more they use such devices. Since Nature did not make them into the ladies they want to seem to be, these men should be treated not as good women but as common whores and driven not only from the courts of great lords but also from the society of all noble men.

20. "Coming then to the qualities of one's body, let me say that it is enough for it to be neither too small nor too large, because both of these conditions bring with them a certain scornful wonder, and men of this sort are stared at as if they were monstrous things; however, having to choose between the two extremes, then it is better to be a bit small than to be of unreasonable size, for men so huge of body, apart from the fact that they are often found to have dull minds, are also unsuited for every exercise requiring agility, which I think is most important for the courtier. So, then, I would like him to have a good build and his limbs to be well proportioned, and to show strength and agility and ease of move-

ment, and to know all the physical exercises befitting a man of war. In this, I think his first duty must be to know how to handle well each kind of weapon on foot and on horse, and to know the advantage of each kind, and especially to be well acquainted with those arms ordinarily used among gentlemen, because apart from making use of them in war (where perhaps so many subtleties are not necessary), there often arise differences between one gentleman and another, resulting in duels, and very often the weapons used are those which are at hand at the moment. Hence, knowledge of them is a very safe thing. Nor am I indeed one of those who say that the skill is forgotten at the moment of need, since certainly whosoever loses his skill at such times shows that he has already lost his heart and head out of fear.

21. "I also believe that knowing how to wrestle is of considerable importance, because it often accompanies the use of weapons on foot. And then both for himself and for his friends, he must understand the quarrels and differences that can arise and should be capable of seizing the advantage, and in all this, he should always show both courage and prudence; nor should he be anxious to get into such fights, except insofar as he is compelled by his honor, for apart from the great danger that uncertain fate carries with it, whoever rushes into such things precipitously and without urgent cause deserves the greatest reproach, even if he is successful at it. However, when one finds oneself to be so involved that he cannot withdraw without reproach, he must be very deliberate in both the preliminaries to the duel and in the duel itself, and always show readiness and courage; nor must he do as those who spend their time in quibbling and arguing over points of honor and, when they have the choice of weapons, choose those which can neither cut nor pierce, and arm themselves as if they were expecting to face a cannonade, and thinking it enough not to be defeated, remain constantly on the defensive and on the retreat, exhibiting extreme cowardice, and in this way making themselves the laughingstock of children, like those two men from Ancona who, a short time ago, fought a duel at Perugia and made everyone who saw them laugh."

"And who were they?" said Signor Gasparo Pallavicino.

Messer Cesare answered: "Two cousins."

Then the Count said: "In their fighting, they appeared to be true brothers." Then, he added: "Weapons are also often used in times of peace in various sports, and gentlemen are seen in such public spectacles in the presence of the people, ladies, and great lords. Therefore, I would like our courtier to be a perfect horseman in every kind of saddle, and besides having a knowledge of horses and what pertains to riding, he

should put every effort and great diligence into going slightly beyond others in all things, so that he may always be recognized as excellent in comparison to others. And just as we read of Alcibiades, who surpassed all the peoples among whom he lived, and each one in whatever they considered themselves best at, so this courtier of ours should surpass all others, and each one in whatever is his special profession. And since it is the particular excellence of the Italians to ride well with the rein and to manage spirited horses with special skill, to tilt and joust, then he must be among the best of the Italians in this. In tournaments, in holding a position, in trying to overcome obstacles, he should compare with the best of the French; in casting lances, in bullfighting, and in casting spears and darts, he should be excellent in comparison to the Spaniards. But, above all, let his every movement be accompanied by a certain good judgment and grace, if he wishes to deserve that universal recognition which is so highly valued.

22. "There are also many other sports, which although not directly dependent upon weapons still have many connections with them and require rather significant manly exertion; and chief among these, appears to me, is the hunt, because it has a certain similarity to war; and in addition to this, it is the true pleasure of great lords and suitable for a man at court, and we know that it was also quite in fashion among the ancients. It is also appropriate for the courtier to know how to swim, jump, run, throw stones, for, besides the usefulness one might derive from this in war, it is very often necessary to show one's ability in such things in order to enhance one's reputation, especially with the crowd with whom one must always come to terms. One more noble sport and most suitable for a man at court is the game of tennis, which displays the disposition of the body and the quickness and nimbleness of every member, and all the other qualities needed to play nearly every other sport. Nor do I consider vaulting on horseback to be less praiseworthy, which, although it is tiring and difficult, makes more than anything else a man agile and skillful; and besides its usefulness, if such ability accompanied by grace, it makes, in my opinion, a finer spectacle than any of the others.

"If, then, our courtier is more than ordinarily skilled in these sports I think that he should give up the others, such as doing cartwheel, tightrope walking, and the like, which have something of the buffoon in them and are rather unsuitable for a gentleman. But since one cannot always be engaged in such strenuous activities (apart from the fact that insistence satiates and eliminates the admiration that is attached to such things), we must always give variety to our lives with diverse activities

Therefore, I would like the courtier sometimes to descend to modest and restful games, and to avoid envy and enter into pleasant conversations with everyone by doing all that others do, without, nevertheless, ever departing from commendable conduct and always following the good judgment which will not allow him to become involved in anything foolish. Let him laugh, joke, banter, play, dance, but in a manner that always reflects his geniality and discretion, and let him be graceful in everything he says or does."

23. "Certainly," Messer Cesare Gonzaga then said, "no one should interrupt the course of this discussion, but if I were to remain silent, I would not be taking advantage of my privilege to speak and satisfy my desire to learn something. May I be pardoned if I ask a question instead of speaking in opposition, for I believe I may be allowed to do so after the example set by our Messer Bernardo, who, in his excessive desire to be considered a handsome man, has broken the rules of our game by asking a question instead of saying something in opposition to what has been said."

"You see," the Duchess then said, "how from a single error many may follow. Therefore, whoever breaks the rules and sets a bad example, as Messer Bernardo has done, deserves to be punished not only for his own failure but also for that of the others."

Then Messer Cesare answered: "So then, Madam, I shall be exempt from punishment, since Messer Bernardo is to be punished both for his own error and for mine."

"On the contrary," said the Duchess, "both of you must receive a double punishment: he for his own failure and for having led you to fail; you for your own failure and for having imitated one who failed."

"Madam," answered Messer Cesare, "as yet, I have not failed; therefore, in order to leave all this punishment to Messer Bernardo alone, I shall remain silent."

And he was already silent, when Signora Emilia, laughing, said: "Say whatever you please, for, with the permission of the Duchess, I pardon both the one who has failed and the one who is going to fail in such a small way."

"So be it, then," the Duchess went on, "but take care not to deceive yourself by thinking it is perhaps more meritorious to be clement than to be just, for forgiving too easily the one who fails injures the one who does not fail. Nevertheless, I would not have my present austerity in finding fault with your indulgence to cause us to lose the opportunity of hearing Messer Cesare's question."

And so, having been given a sign by the Duchess and Signora Emilia, Messer Cesare said at once:

24. "If I remember well, it seems to me, Count, that this evening you have repeated several times that the courtier has to accompany with grace his actions, gestures, habits, in short his every movement; and it seems to me that you consider this to be the seasoning for everything, without which all the other properties and good qualities are of little worth.³³ And I truly believe that everyone would easily allow himself to be persuaded of this, because, by the very meaning of the word, it can be said that he who has grace finds grace with others. But since you have said that this is often a gift of nature and the heavens, and even that when it is not so perfect it can be much enhanced by care and hard work, those men who are born as fortunate and as rich in such treasure as some we know, it seems to me, have little need in this of another teacher, because that benignant favor from heaven raises them almost in spite of themselves higher than they might have desired and makes them both pleasing and admirable to everyone. I am not, therefore, discussing this, since it is not in our power to acquire it by ourselves. But regarding those who by nature have only so much that their actions can be graceful only through hard work, industry, and care, I would like to know by means of what art, with what discipline, and with what means they can acquire this grace, both in physical exercise, in which you consider it to be necessary, and also in all the other things they say or do. Therefore, since you have, by praising this quality so highly, generated in all of us, I believe, an ardent desire to pursue it, according to the task set before you by Lady Emilia, you are still obliged to satisfy that desire by instructing us about it."

25. "I am not obliged," said the Count, "to teach you how to become graceful or anything else, but only to show you what a perfect courtier should be. Nor would I take on the task of teaching you how to acquire this perfection, especially since a little while ago I said that the courtier should know how to wrestle, vault, and so many other things, which, never having learned them myself, I realize that you all know quite well just how I would be able to teach them to you. Let it suffice to say that just as a good soldier knows how to tell the blacksmith what shape, style, and quality his armor must have and yet would not know how to teach him to make it or to hammer or temper it, just so I, perhaps, shall be able to tell you what a perfect courtier should be but not be able to teach you what you have to do to become one. Yet, in order to give you an answer to your question insofar as it is in my power, and given the fact that it is almost proverbial that grace is not

learned, let me say that anyone who wishes to be graceful in physical exercises (presupposing first of all that he is not by nature incapable) must begin early and learn the principles from the best teachers. How important this seemed to King Philip of Macedonia can be seen from the fact that it was Aristotle, so famous a philosopher and perhaps the greatest the world has ever known, that he wanted to teach the first elements of letters to his son Alexander. And among the men we know today, consider how well and gracefully Signor Galeazzo Sanseverino, Grand Equerry of France,³⁴ performs all physical exercises, and this because, besides the natural inclination he has for this, he has made every effort to learn from good teachers and always to have near him excellent men, taking from each of them the best they have to offer. Thus, just as in wrestling, vaulting, and in the handling of many kinds of weapons he took our Messer Pietro Monte as a guide, who is, as you know, the only true master of every kind of strength and agility that can be learned, so too in riding, jousting, and whatever other activity, he has always kept before his eyes the men known to be most perfect in those professions.

26. "Anyone, therefore, who would like to be a good pupil, must, besides doing things well, always take great care to resemble his master, and, if it is possible, to transform himself into his master. And when he feels that he has made good progress, he will find it very useful to observe different men of the same profession, and governing himself with the good judgment that must always be his guide, he should choose various qualities now from one man and now from another. And just as the bee in the green meadows goes about among the tall grass robbing the nectar from the flowers, so our courtier must steal this grace from those who seem to have it and from each that part which is most commendable—not doing as a friend of ours, whom all of you know, who thought himself to be much like King Ferdinand the Younger of Aragon and took care to imitate him in nothing other than in the way he frequently would raise his head, twisting a corner of his mouth, a habit which the King had contracted through illness. And there are many men like this who think it is enough, if they could only resemble a great man in some one thing; and often they choose the man's only bad habit.

"But having already thought often about the source of this grace, and leaving aside those who have received it from their stars, I have discovered a universal rule, which in this matter seems to apply more than any other in all human actions, whether they be said or done: that is, to avoid affectation as much as possible as if it were a rough and dangerous reef, and (to coin a new term for it, perhaps) to practice in all

things a certain *sprezzatura* or nonchalance,³⁵ which conceals all signs of artistry and makes whatever one does or says seem effortless and unstudied. I believe that grace is truly derived from this, because everyone knows the difficulty of accomplishing well something which is difficult, and for this reason facility in such things generates the greatest wonder;³⁶ and, on the other hand, to labor over something or, as we say, "to pull your hair out" over something, reveals the greatest lack of grace and causes everything, no matter what its worth may be, to be considered of little value.

"Therefore, what does not seem to be art may be called true art; nor must one take more care in anything than in concealing it, because if it is exposed, this discredits a man completely and causes him to be held in slight esteem. I remember having once read about certain excellent orators of antiquity who, among their other clever accomplishments, tried to make everyone believe that they had no knowledge of letters, and, hiding their knowledge, they made their orations appear to be composed in a most simple manner and according to what nature and truth offered them rather than art and effort; for had their skill been recognized, it would have created fear in the minds of the people that they were being deceived by it. So you see how art and intense effort, once it is revealed, deprive everything of grace. Who among you does not laugh when our Messer Pierpaolo³⁷ dances the way he does with those hops and skips of his, legs rigid and on tiptoes, never moving his head, as if he were a stick of wood, and all with such care that he actually appears to be counting his steps? What eye is so blind as not to see in this the lack of grace in affectation and not see the grace of that easy manner (for in reference to bodily movements many call it that) found in many of the men and women present here, who in their manner of speaking or laughing or posture show that they do not care and appear to be thinking more about everything else but that, so as to make anyone watching them believe that they neither know how nor are capable of making a mistake?"

* * *

[After a brief discussion of affectation, the Count observes that affectation is detrimental in all pursuits, both military and cultural, and that "this excellence—which is the opposite of affectation, and which, at the moment, we are calling *sprezzatura* or nonchalance—besides being the real source from which grace springs, brings with it another adornment which, when it accomplishes any human action, however small, not only discloses at once how much the person knows who does it, but often causes it to be judged much greater than it actually is, since it

impresses upon the minds of the onlookers the opinion that he who performs well with so much facility must possess even greater skill than this, and that if he were to devote care and effort to what he does, he could do it far better." This discussion is followed by the conclusion that the courtier must be able to express himself gracefully and must be knowledgeable. They debate whether or not Tuscan is the preferred linguistic model. Then the Count returns to the subject of grace and the cultivation of the soul.]

42. "But, besides goodness, I think that the true and principal adornment of the mind is, for everyone, letters, although the French recognize only the nobility of arms and consider all the rest worthless, so that not only do they not value learning but they abhor it and hold all men of letters in contempt, believing that it is a great insult to call anyone a scholar."

Then the Magnifico Giuliano responded: "What you are saying is true—that this error has prevailed now for a long time among the French; but if kind fate wills that Monseigneur d'Angoulême³⁸ succeeds to the crown as is hoped, then I believe that just as the glory of arms now flourishes and shines forth in France, so also must that of letters flourish there with supreme elegance, because not long ago, when I was at that court, I saw this lord, and it seemed to me that, besides the disposition of his body and the beauty of his face, he had in his bearing such greatness—yet accompanied with a certain gracious humanity—that it made the realm of France seem rather insignificant compared to him. I have heard since then from many gentlemen, both French and Italian, much about his most noble manners, his greatness of spirit, his valor and liberality, and I was told, among other things, that he loved and esteemed letters in the highest degree and held all men of letters in the highest regard; and that he condemned the French themselves for being so opposed to this profession, especially since they have in their midst a university as noble as that of Paris, which is frequented by students from all over."

Then the Count said: "It is a great wonder that at such a tender age, guided solely by natural instinct, against the usual custom of his country, he on his own should have chosen such a good path; and since subjects always follow the customs of their superiors, it may be that, as you say, the French will yet come to esteem letters for their true worth, which they can be easily persuaded to do if they will listen to reason, since nothing is more naturally desired by men, or more characteristic of

them, than knowledge, and it is great folly to say or believe that knowledge is not always a good thing.

43. "And if I could speak with them or with others who were of an opinion contrary to mine, I would try to show them how useful and necessary to our life and dignity letters are, for they were bestowed upon men by God as a supreme gift; nor would I lack examples of a great many military commanders of ancient times, who joined the glory of letters to their courage in arms. For, as you know, Alexander³⁹ held Homer in such veneration that he always kept the *Iliad* by his bed, and he gave the greatest attention not only to these studies but to philosophical speculations as well under the instruction of Aristotle.⁴⁰ Alcibiades⁴¹ increased and enhanced his good qualities through letters and the teachings of Socrates.⁴² The attention that Caesar gave to studies is also witnessed by those divinely written works of his which have survived. Scipio Africanus,⁴³ it is said, always had the book of Xenophon in his hands, wherein a perfect king under the name of Cyrus is described.⁴⁴ I could tell you of Lucullus, Sulla, Pompey, Brutus,⁴⁵ and many other Romans and Greeks, but I shall only mention so excellent a commander as Hannibal,⁴⁶ who was by nature fierce and a stranger to humanity, treacherous and contemptuous of both men and gods, but who had, nonetheless, the rudiments of letters and knowledge of Greek. And, if I am not mistaken, it seems to me I read once that he even left a book which he himself wrote in Greek.

"But to tell you this is superfluous, for I am well aware that you all know how the French deceive themselves into thinking that letters are harmful to arms. You know that the true stimulus of great and bold deeds in war is the desire for glory, and whoever is moved to that for gain or any other motive, not only fails to accomplish anything worthwhile, but deserves to be called a wretched merchant and not a gentleman. And it is true glory that is entrusted to the sacred treasury of letters, as everyone knows, except those unhappy ones who have never tasted them.

"What soul is so modest, timid, and abject that when reading about the deeds and the greatness of Caesar, Alexander, Scipio, Hannibal, and many others, he does not truly burn with ardent desire to be like these men and would not relinquish this fleeting life of a few days' duration to acquire an almost perpetual life of fame, which, despite death, makes him live on more renowned than before? But anyone who does not taste the sweetness of letters cannot know how great is the glory so long preserved by them, and measures it only by the life of one or two men, because his own memory is so limited; hence, he cannot value this brief life of glory as he could one which is almost eternal if, by misfortune, he

was denied the knowledge of it; and since he does not esteem it as much as one who has knowledge of it, it is reasonable to believe that he will not risk such danger to win it as one would who knows of it.

"I would not want some adversary to cite instances to the contrary in order to refute my opinion, alleging that with all their knowledge of letters, the Italians have shown little worth in arms for some time now, which is, unfortunately, only too true. But certainly it may be said that here the fault of a few men has inflicted grave harm along with eternal infamy on the many, and that they have been the true cause of our ruin and of the prostrate—if not dead—virtue of our spirits. Yet, it would be even more shameful for us to make this public than it is for the French to be ignorant of letters; hence, it is better to pass over in silence what cannot be remembered without pain and, leaving this subject which I took up unwillingly, to return to our courtier.

44. "I would like him to be more than ordinarily learned in letters, at least in those studies which we call the humanities; and that he have a knowledge not only of the Latin language but also of Greek, because of the many different things that are so beautifully written in that language. Let him be versed in the poets and no less in the orators and historians and also experienced in writing verse and prose, particularly in our own language, for, besides the pleasure that he himself will take in this, he will never, in this way, be at a loss in conversing pleasantly with ladies, who usually like such things. And if because of his other affairs or through too little study, he is unable to attain such perfection that his writings are worthy of great praise, let him be careful to suppress them, so that others will not laugh at him, and show them only to a friend who can be trusted; because at least they will be of some use to him in that, through such practice, he will know how to judge the writings of others. For, in fact, it rarely happens that someone who is not accustomed to writing, however learned he may be, can ever completely understand the toil and diligence of writers or taste the sweetness and excellence of styles, and those intrinsic subtleties that are often found in the writers of ancient times.

"Moreover, these studies will make him well informed and (as Aristippus⁴⁷ said to the tyrant) bold and self-confident with everyone. I would, however, insist that our courtier keep one precept firmly in mind—that is, that in this and in every other thing, to be diffident and reserved rather than forward, and take care not to convince himself falsely that he knows what he does not know, because we are all by nature more avid for praise than we should be, and more than any other sweet song or sound, our ears love the melody of words that praise us;

and thus, like sirens' voices, they are often the cause of shipwreck to one who does not stop up his ears to such beguiling harmony. There were among ancient sages those who, recognizing this danger, wrote books to show how the true friend can be distinguished from the flatterer. But of what value is it if many, indeed countless, persons, are well aware that they are being flattered, and yet love the one who flatters them and hate the one who tells them the truth? And often finding the one who praises them to be too sparing in his words, they themselves help him along by saying such things about themselves that even the most outrageous flatterer himself must feel ashamed.

"Let us leave these blind ones in their error and decide that our courtier has such good judgment that he will not let himself be told that black is white or presume of himself more than he clearly knows to be true, and particularly in those things which, if you remember well, Messer Cesare in his game reminded us we had often used as the means of revealing the folly of one person and another. In fact, if he knows the praises bestowed on him are true, he should, in order to avoid error, not assent to them too openly, nor confirm them without some protest, but rather, let him disclaim them modestly, always giving the impression and truly esteeming arms as his principal profession, and that all his other good qualities serve merely to decorate them; this he should do especially among soldiers, in order not to act as those who in the world of scholarship wish to appear as soldiers or those who among soldiers wish to appear as men of letters. In this way, for the reasons we have given, he will avoid affectation and even the ordinary things he does will appear to be very great."

45. Then Messer Pietro Bembo replied: "I do not know, Count, why you expect this courtier, who is lettered and who has so many other virtuous qualities, to regard everything as an embellishment for arms and not regard arms and the rest as an embellishment for letters, which, without any other accompaniment, are as superior to arms in dignity as the soul is to the body, since the practice of letters is properly related to the soul, even as the practice of arms is related to the body."

Then the Count replied: "On the contrary, the practice of arms belongs to the soul as well as the body. But I would not have you be the judge in such a case, Messer Pietro, because you would be far too suspect of partiality by one of the parties. And since this debate has long been carried on by very wise men, there is no need to renew it; but I consider it settled in favor of arms, and since I may form our courtier the way I would like him to be, I would have him be of the same opinion. And if you are of the contrary opinion, then wait until you hear about a contest

in which the one who defends the argument for arms is permitted to use arms, just as those who defend letters make use of letters in their debate. For if each one avails himself of his own tools, you will see that the one who uses letters will lose."

"Ah," said Messer Pietro, "you earlier condemned the French for placing so little value on letters, and you spoke of how greatly they have enlightened men and how they make men immortal, and now it appears that you have changed your mind. Do you not remember that

Once Alexander had come to the famous tomb
of the proud Achilles, sighing, he said:

"O fortunate one, who found so clear a trumpet,
And one who could write of you in so lofty a fashion!"
[Petrarch, *Canzoniere*, sonnet 187]

And if Alexander envied Achilles, not for his deeds but for the fortune which had granted him the blessing of having his actions celebrated by Homer, we can see that he esteemed Homer's letters more than Achilles' arms.⁴⁸ What other judge, therefore, would you have, or what other verdict on the worth of arms and letters than the one pronounced by one of the greatest commanders who has ever lived?"

46. Then the Count replied: "I blame the French for thinking that letters are detrimental to the profession of arms, and I hold that to no one is it more fitting to be learned than to a soldier, and I would like these two qualities to be tightly united in our courtier, and each an aid to the other, as is most fitting. Nor does this mean that I have changed my opinion. But, as I have said, I do not wish to debate which of the two is more worthy of praise. Let it suffice to say that men of letters almost never choose to praise anyone but great men and glorious deeds, which in themselves deserve praise because of the inherent essential virtue from which they derive; besides this, they provide a truly noble theme for writers, and are in themselves a great embellishment and, in part, the reason why these writings endure, which perhaps would not be so much read or valued if they lacked the noble subject, but would be empty and of little moment.

"And if Alexander envied Achilles for being praised by Homer, you should not, however, conclude that he esteemed letters more than arms; if he thought himself to be as far below Achilles in these things as he judged all those who were to write of him must be below Homer, I am certain that he would have much preferred carrying out his own fine deeds than hearing praise from others. Hence, I believe that what he said was tacit praise of himself and a desire for what it seemed to him he

lacked, that is, the supreme excellence of a writer, and not for what he presumed himself to have already achieved, that is, prowess in arms, in which he did not at all judge Achilles to be his superior; therefore, he called him fortunate, as if to indicate that if in the future his own fame was not as celebrated in the world as Achilles', which was made bright and illustrious by such an inspired poem, this did not come about because his valor and merits were fewer and less worthy of praise, but because of the way fortune had offered Achilles such a miracle of nature to be the glorious trumpet for his deeds. And perhaps he also wished to rouse some noble talent to write about him, showing that his pleasure in this would be equal to his love and veneration for the sacred monuments of letters about which we have now spoken quite enough."

"On the contrary," replied Signor Ludovico Pio, "far too much, because I believe it impossible to find a vessel that is capable of containing all the things you want to put into our courtier."

Then the Count said: "Wait a bit, for there are still many more to come."

Pietro da Napoli remarked: "In this case, Grasso de' Medici⁴⁹ will have a great advantage over Messer Pietro Bembo."

* * *

[Everyone laughs at Pietro's witty remark, and at the end of the first book, the Count goes on to advocate that the courtier should also have a good, practical knowledge of music and painting.]

Book II

[In Book II, Castiglione once again raises the problem of the passing of time, observing that courts of the present are as praiseworthy as those in the past. Federico Fregoso is charged with the duty of explaining how the courtier ought to exercise his good qualities and do the things that have been said will benefit him. Among other things, the courtier must have the good judgment to avoid arousing envy. He must avoid showy affectation in public or private activities, such as the exercise of arms or dancing, tennis, games, and conversation, and in his relations with his prince he should avoid flattery, although justified praise is acceptable. Federico's discussion of the courtier's relation to his prince leads him to conclude that a courtier should always be worthy of the prince's favors.]

21. Here Vincenzio Calmeta⁵⁰ said: "Before you go any further, if I have understood correctly, it seems to me you said earlier that the ~~best~~ way to gain favors is to deserve them, and that the courtier ought to wait until they are offered to him rather than seeking them presumptuously. I rather think that this rule is hardly appropriate, and it seems to me that experience very clearly shows the contrary, because nowadays few are favored by lords, except the presumptuous, and I know you can testify that some, who, failing to find themselves quite in the good graces of their princes, have pleased them only through presumption. If there are some who have risen through modesty, I for my part know of none, and I will even give you time to think about this, for I am confident that you will find few. And if you consider the court of France, which today is one of the noblest in Christendom, you will discover that all those who enjoy universal favor there tend to be presumptuous, and not only with one another, but also with the King himself."

"Do not say that," replied Messer Federico. "There are, on the contrary, very modest and courteous gentlemen in France; it is true that they are accustomed to a certain liberty and an unceremonious familiarity which is right and natural for them and should not, therefore, be called presumption, because in this particular manner of theirs, although they laugh and mock the presumptuous, they still value highly those they believe to be worthy and modest."

Calmeta replied: "Look at the Spaniards, who seem to be masters of courtiership, and consider how many you find, who are not extremely presumptuous both with ladies and with gentlemen, and even more than the French insofar as they first display extreme modesty; and in doing so, they are truly discerning, because, as I have said, the princes of our time all favor only those who have such manners."

22. Then Messer Federico answered: "I certainly do not wish to tolerate your efforts to place this blame on the princes of our times, Messer Vicenzio, because there are still many who love modesty, although, I do not say that this alone will suffice to make a man pleasing; I do say, however, that when it is joined to great worth, it honors the one who possesses it greatly; and although worth is silent about itself, praiseworthy deeds speak loudly, and are much more admirable than if they were accompanied by presumption and rashness. I certainly do not wish to deny that there are many presumptuous Spaniards, but I will say that those who are highly esteemed are very modest for the most part. Then there are certain others who remain so aloof that they shun the company of men to a degree that exceeds a certain mean, so much so that they cause themselves to be considered either too timid or too proud; and I do

not praise such as these in any way, nor do I wish modesty to be so dry and arid that it becomes boorishness.

"But let the courtier be eloquent when it meets his purpose, and prudent and wise in political discussions, and let him have the good judgment to know how to come to terms with customs of the countries in which he happens to be staying; then, let him be entertaining in less important matters, and let him be well spoken on any subject. But above all, let him always be inclined toward what is good, never envious or slanderous; and never let him bring himself to seek grace or favor by corrupt or dishonest means."

Then Calmeta said: "I assure you that all the other means are far more uncertain and more time-consuming than these you are finding fault with, because, to repeat myself, our princes today love only those who take such a path."

"Do not say such a thing," Messer Federico then replied, "because that would be too clear an argument that the princes of our times are all corrupt and evil, which is not so, because there are actually some good ones among them. But if our courtier finds himself by chance in the service of one who is corrupt and malicious, let him leave that person's service as soon as he discovers this, so that he does not experience the bitter anguish all good men feel who serve the wicked."

"We must pray God," responded Calmeta, "to give us good men to serve, since once we have them, we must endure them as they are, because countless considerations compel a gentleman to remain with his patron once he has entered his services. The misfortune lies in ever having begun, and in that case, courtiers are in the same circumstances as those unfortunate birds that are born in some gloomy vale."

"It seems to me," said Messer Federico, "that duty must be more important than all other considerations. And a gentleman must not leave his patron when he is at war or in adversity, for then it could be thought that he did so to better his own fortunes or that he apparently lost the means for some gainful profit; but at any other time, I believe he has the right to quit, and should quit, the service which is sure to disgrace him in the eyes of good men, because everyone assumes that anyone who serves the good is good, and anyone who serves the wicked is wicked."

23. Signor Ludovico Pio then said: "I would like you to clear up one of my doubts; that is, whether a gentleman, while he serves a prince, is obligated to obey him in everything he commands, even if it is something dishonest and dishonorable."

"In dishonest things we are not obliged to obey anyone," responded Messer Federico.

"And," continued Signor Ludovico, "if I happen to be in the service of a prince who treats me well, and who trusts that I will do for him whatever possible, and he were to command me to go and kill a man or something of the sort, am I to refuse to do it?"

"You ought to obey your lord," answered Messer Federico, "in all the things that are useful and honorable to him, not in those that are harmful and shameful; thus, if he should command you to do something treacherous, not only are you not obligated to do it, but you are obligated not to do it, both for your own sake and in order not to be the minister of your lord's shame. It is true that many things which are evil appear, at first sight, to be good, and many things which seem evil are good; hence, it is sometimes permissible to kill not just one man in the service of one's lord but ten thousand, and to do many other things, which might seem evil to someone who did not think them through, but which are not evil at all."

Then Signor Gaspar Pallavicino said: "Oh! I beg you, discuss this a little further, and teach us how what is truly good can be distinguished from what appears to be good."

"Pardon me," said Messer Federico, "I do not wish to go into that, for there would be too much to say; I prefer the whole matter be left to your discretion."

* * *

[Following the discussion of the courtier's relationship with his lord, Federico leads the group to consider the courtier's dealings with his equals as well as his attire, his choice of friends, witty conversation, the definition of man as an animal who laughs, the role of laughter, and the decorous mean in the courtier's behavior.]

41. [Federico continues.] "Therefore, in one's manner of living and in one's conversation, the safest thing is always to act according to a certain respectable mean, which truly provides a very great and strong shield against envy, which is always to be avoided as much as is possible. I would have our courtier take care not to acquire the name of a liar or a boaster, which can sometimes happen to even those who do not deserve it; therefore, in all his discussions, let him always be careful not to go beyond the bounds of verisimilitude, and not to tell too often those truths that have the appearance of being lies, like many who never speak of anything but miracles and who want to be held in such authority that every incredible thing they say must be believed. There are others who at

the beginning of a friendship, in order to gain favor with their new friend, swear, on the first day they speak with him, that there is no one in the world whom they love more than him, and that they would willingly die to do him some service and other such unreasonable things; and when they leave him, they make a show of crying and being unable to speak a word because of their grief. So, in wanting to be thought of as very loving, they allow themselves to be thought of as liars and foolish flatterers.

"But it would be too long and troublesome to try to discuss all the faults that can occur in one's conversation; therefore, as for what I desire in the courtier, let it suffice to say, beyond the things that have already been said, that he should be one who is never lacking in things to say that are good and suited to those with whom he is conversing, and that he know how to restore with a certain sweetness the minds of his listeners and induce them discreetly to merriment and laughter with pleasant witticisms and humor, so that, without ever being tedious or boring, he may continually give pleasure."

* * *

[Federico explains that some people are more witty by nature than others, and that there are two kinds of pleasantry, one characteristic of lengthy discussions and the other of brief, pointed remarks. Bibbiena carries on the discussion of pleasantries, and Signora Emilia finally asks Bernardo how pleasantries are to be used.]

45. [Bernardo continues.] "I shall say as briefly as I can whatever occurs to me on the subject of what moves us to laughter, which is so characteristic of mankind,⁵¹ that in order to describe man, we are in the habit of saying that he is an animal who is inclined towards laughter. For laughter is found only in men and nearly always shows evidence of a certain good humor which is felt inwardly in the mind, and which by nature is attracted to pleasure and desires rest and recreation; wherefore we take note of many things devised by men for this purpose, such as festivals and many and varied kinds of spectacles. And because we tend to like those who are the source of such recreation, it was the custom of ancient kings, the Romans, Athenians, and many others, in order to win the goodwill of the people and feed the eyes and minds of the multitude, to build great theaters and other public buildings, and there they would show new games, horse and chariot races, combats, strange animals, comedies, tragedies, and mimes; nor were austere philosophers opposed to such sights, and they would often, by means of spectacles of this kind and at banquets, relax their minds, which were exhausted by their lofty

discussions and inspired thoughts—which is also something all kinds of men willingly do—for not only farmers, sailors, and all those who carry on hard and rough work with their hands, but holy men of religion, and prisoners awaiting death from hour to hour, all go in search of some remedy and medicine to restore themselves. Therefore, everything that elicits laughter exhilarates man's soul and gives pleasure, and for a moment in time allows us to forget the bothersome worries of which our life is so full. Thus, as you see, laughter is most pleasing to everyone, and anyone who elicits it at the right time and in the right way is much to be praised. But what laughter is, where it dwells, and in what way it sometimes takes possession of our veins, our eyes, our mouths, and sides, and seems to want to make us burst, so that no matter what power we exert upon it, it is impossible to hold it back—I will leave that argument to Democritus, who, even if he were to promise to do so, would not know how to explain it.

46. "Now then, the place and approximate source from which the ridiculous arises consists in a certain deformity, because one not only laughs at those things which contain elements of incongruity and that seem to be wrong without really being so. I do not know how to state it differently, but if you think about it, you will see that what we laugh at is nearly always something that is not quite proper but yet is not wrong.

"Now, as far as the means the courtier ought to use to make others laugh and within what limits, I shall try to tell you, insofar as my judgment allows, for it is not always proper for the courtier to make people laugh, nor should he do so in the manner of madmen, drunks, fools, bumblerers, or buffoons. And although these kinds of men seem to be in demand at the courts, still, they do not deserve to be called courtiers, but each should be called by his proper name and judged for what he is.

"The limits and extent of provoking laughter by making fun of someone must also be carefully considered, as well as who it is that we make fun of, because there is nothing to laugh at in deriding some miserable wretch, or notorious scoundrel, since the latter seems to deserve a greater punishment than being ridiculed, and people are not inclined to make fun of the wretched unless, in their misfortune, they are boastful, proud, and presumptuous. One must also take care not to mock those who are universally favored and loved by all and who are powerful, because sometimes a man can engender dangerous enmities by doing so. But it is proper to ridicule and laugh at the vices found in people who are neither so wretched that they excite compassion nor so wicked that they would seem to deserve being condemned to capital

punishment, nor of so high a station that their slightest anger could do us great harm.

47. "You must also know that the same situations from which amusing witticisms are extracted can likewise provide serious maxims for praising and blaming, and sometimes in the same words: just as in praising a generous man who shares all his belongings with his friends, it is customary to say that what he has is not his own; and the same can be said to condemn someone who has stolen or acquired through some other evil means what he possesses. It is also said, 'She is very much a lady,' by one who wishes to praise her for prudence and goodness; the same could be said by someone who wanted to condemn her, indicating that she is the lady of many. But more often it is a matter of exploiting the same situations rather than the same words; just as recently while a lady was at Mass in a church with three noblemen, one of whom served her in love, a poor beggar appeared, and, having placed himself before her, begged her for alms; and, though he repeatedly begged her with much tiresome persistence and a pitiful voice and moans, with all this, she never gave him alms or even dismissed him by making a sign that he should go with God, but stood there completely lost in thought as if she were thinking about something else. Then the cavalier who was in love with her said to his two companions: 'You see what I can hope for from my lady, who is so cruel that she gives no alms to that poor, starving, destitute man who begs with so much passion and with such insistence, but she does not even dismiss him—so much does she enjoy seeing before her a man who languishes in misery and asks for mercy in vain.'

"One of his two friends replied: 'That is not cruelty but this lady's tacit way of teaching you to understand that she is never pleased with anyone who begs with too much persistence.'

"The other answered: 'On the contrary, it is a warning to him that, although she does not give what is asked of her, she still likes to be begged for it.'

"So there you have it! From the fact that this lady did not give the poor man leave arises a saying of severe censure, one of modest praise, and another of biting sarcasm.

48. "Turning back now, to explain the kind of pleasantries that pertain to our subject, I say that in my opinion, there are to be found three kinds, even though Messer Federico has mentioned only two; that is, that long narrative, urbane and pleasing, that recounts the outcome of an action; and the other, the spontaneous, sharp readiness of a single remark. On that account, we shall add a third kind, which are

called 'practical jokes,' which include in them both long narratives and short sayings, as well as a certain amount of action sometimes.

"Now the first kind which consists of a continuous narrative is almost like a short story. And to give you an example. At the time when Pope Alexander the Sixth died and Pius the Third was made Pope, Messer Antonio Agnello, your fellow Mantuan, my Duchess, being at Rome and in the Vatican Palace, while talking about the death of one and the creation as Pope of the other, and making various judgments on all that with certain of his friends, said: 'Gentlemen, even in Catullus' time, doors began to speak without tongues and to hear without ears, and, in this way, to expose adulteries; now, although men are not as worthy as they were in those times, it may be that doors, many of which, at least here in Rome, are made of ancient marble, have the same properties that they had then; and, for my part, I believe that these two here could clear up all our doubts, if we wished to learn from them.'

"Then, the gentlemen there became rather curious, waiting to find out what the outcome of all this would be. Messer Antonio, continuing to walk back and forth, suddenly lifted his eyes to look at one of the doors in the hall in which they were walking, and after stopping a moment, with his finger, he pointed out to his companions the inscription above it, which bore the name of Pope Alexander, at the end of which was a V and an I, signifying, as you know, the Sixth, and he said: 'You see what this door says: *Alexander Pope VI*, which means that he became Pope by means of the violence he employed, and that he made more use of violence than reason.'⁵² Now let us see if we can learn something about the new Pope from this other door,' and turning as if by chance to that other door, he pointed out the inscription NPPV, which signified Nicolas Papa Quintus; and he said at once: 'Alas, bad news; you see how this door tells us *Nihil Papa Valet*.'⁵³

* * *

[The remainder of Book II is devoted to an exploration of the different forms of wit and their proper use in courtly conversation. Messer Bernardo warns that impiety must be avoided in jests. The book ends in a discussion of women, including an attack upon them by Messer Ottaviano Fregoso and Messer Gasparo Pallavicino, and a discussion of the courtier's relationships with them. The Duchess suggests that the Magnifico Giuliano speak on the qualities desirable in a woman. He replies as follows.]

100. "Madam," replied the Magnifico, "I do not know how well advised you are to assign me an undertaking of such importance, which

in truth, I do not feel equal to; nor am I like the Count and Messer Federico, who with their eloquence have created a courtier who never existed and perhaps never can exist. Nevertheless, if it pleases you for me to bear this burden, at least let it be on the same terms that these other gentlemen enjoyed: that is, that anyone may contradict me whenever he pleases, and I shall regard this not as a contradiction but as assistance, and perhaps through the correction of my errors, we shall discover the perfection of the courtly lady we are seeking."

Book III

[At the beginning of Book III, Castiglione restates his purpose of immortalizing through his writings the court of Urbino, which, he tells us, is superior to all others in Italy. When the discussions are renewed the next day, the noble company decides that the courtly lady is indispensable both to the atmosphere of a court and to the actions and behavior of the courtier.]

4. . . . Then the Magnifico, turning to the Duchess, said: "Since it pleases you, Madam, I will say what I must say, but with the great fear that I shall give no satisfaction, and certainly it would be a much lesser task to create a lady who deserved to be queen of the world than a perfect court lady, for I do not know where to find the model for the latter, whereas for the queen, I would not have to look very far, since it would be enough for me only to imagine the divine attributes of a lady whom I know, and, in contemplating those, to direct all my thoughts to expressing clearly in words what many see with their eyes, and if I could do no more, I would have discharged my duty by merely mentioning her name."⁵⁴

Then the Duchess said: "Do not exceed our limits, Signor Magnifico, but keep to the order given and create the court lady, so that such a noble lady may have someone who can serve her in a fitting manner."

The Magnifico continued: "Then, Madam, in order to assure you that your commands can induce me to attempt even to do what I still do not know how to do, I shall describe this excellent lady as I would like her to be, and once I have created her in my own way, and since I may not then have another, I will take her, like Pygmalion, for my own. And

although Signor Gasparo has said that the same rules given for the courtier serve also for the lady, I am of a different opinion; for although some qualities are common to both and are as necessary to the man as to the woman, there are yet others that are more suited to the woman than to the man, and some more fitting to a man, to which a woman should be a complete stranger. I say the same for physical exercises, but, above all, it seems to me that in her style, manners, words, gestures, and bearing, the woman should be very different from the man, for just as it is fitting for him to show a certain strong, solid manliness, so it is well for the woman to have a soft and delicate tenderness, with a sweet feminine manner in her every movement, which in her going and staying and in whatever she says always makes her seem a woman, without any similarity to a man.

"Adding this note of caution to the rules which these gentlemen have taught the courtier, then, I think that she should be able to make use of many of them and adorn herself with the best accomplishments, as Signor Gasparo says. For I hold that many virtues of the mind are as necessary to a woman as to a man: to be of noble birth; to avoid affectation; to be naturally graceful in all her actions; to be well mannered, witty, prudent, but not arrogant, envious, slanderous, vain, contentious, or inept; to know how to gain and hold the favor of her mistress and all others; to perform well and gracefully the exercises suitable for women. I do think that beauty is more important to her than to the courtier, for truly much is lacking to that woman who lacks beauty. Also, she must be more circumspect and more careful not to give anyone the opportunity to speak ill of her, and conduct herself so that not only may she avoid being sullied by guilt, but also by even the suspicion of it, for a woman does not have as many ways of defending herself against false accusations as a man does. But since Count Ludovico has explained in minute detail the principal profession of the courtier, and has insisted that it be that of arms, I think it is only right to say what I consider to be that of the court lady; and when I have done this in a satisfactory manner, I believe I shall have discharged the greater part of my duty.

5. "Leaving aside, then, those virtues of the mind which she is to have in common with the courtier, such as prudence, magnanimity, continence, and many others, and likewise those qualities that are fitting to all women, such as goodness, discretion, the ability to manage her husband's property, his house and children (if she is married), and all the qualities that are required in a good mother, I say that, in my opinion, a lady who is at court should have, above all else, a certain pleasing

affability, whereby she will know how to entertain graciously every kind of man with charming and respectable conversation appropriate to the time and place and to the social standing of the person with whom she speaks, joining to gentle and modest manners and to the candor that should always govern all her actions a quick liveliness of wit, by which she will show herself a stranger to all boorishness, but with such a kind manner that she causes herself to be thought no less chaste, prudent, and gracious than pleasing, witty, and discreet. Thus, she must observe a certain mean (difficult to achieve and, in a way, composed of contraries), and be careful not to go beyond certain fixed limits.

"Now this lady, in her desire to be thought chaste and virtuous, must not be so shy or appear to abhor company and conversation that is a little frivolous to the point that she withdraws when she finds herself involved, because it could easily be thought that she was feigning such austerity in order to hide something about herself which she feared others might find out; for such unsuitable manners are always odious. Yet, on the other hand, in order to seem free and agreeable, she must not utter indecent words or engage in any unrestrained or excessive familiarity or in actions which might cause others to believe about her what is perhaps not true; but when she finds herself in the midst of such discussions, she should listen with a slight blush of shame.

"Likewise, she should flee from an error into which I have seen many fall, which is to gossip and willingly listen to anyone who speaks evil of others, because those women who, when they hear stories about the immodest behavior of other women, become upset and pretend not to believe it, and show that to them such an immodest woman is quite a monster, provide a pretext for thinking that, since this defect seems so enormous to them, they themselves might be guilty of it. And those who always go about prying into the love affairs of other women and telling about them in such detail and with such delight appear to be envious and anxious for everyone to know about it, so that the same thing by mistake may not be attributed to them; and so they give in to a certain kind of laughter and assume certain mannerisms that make it evident that they are taking the greatest delight over it all. And as a result men, although it appears that they listen to them willingly, generally have a bad opinion of such women and have little respect for them, and men take these ways of theirs as an invitation to go further, and then they often do pass beyond the limits which deservedly brings them to shame, and, in the end, men esteem them so little that they care nothing for their company and find them rather distasteful. On the other hand, there is no man so shameless and brash that he has no reverence for those

women who are judged to be chaste and virtuous, for that gravity tempered with wisdom and goodness is like a shield against the insolence and bestiality of presumptuous men; and thus we see that a word, a laugh, an act of kindness, however small it may be, coming from an honest woman, is more prized by everyone than all the affectations and caresses of those who without reserve show their lack of shame—and, if they are not unchaste, with their unrestrained laughter, loquacity, insolence, and such scurrilous manners of this sort, they give the impression of being so."

* * *

[Following the Magnifico's discourse upon the suitable traits of a court lady, Signor Gasparo asks him what physical exercises are proper for her, how she ought to converse, and what she should know. The Magnifico replies that a lady should participate in no strenuous exercises and must be graceful and slow to move. She must be gay and know how to dress, have a knowledge of letters, music, painting, and dance. He refutes Gasparo's contention that women represent an imperfection in nature, concluding that the lady must be knowledgeable in the discourse of love and in judging who truly loves her. Outside marriage, she should seek only spiritual and honorable love.]

Book IV

[At the beginning of Book IV, the narrator laments the loss of three of the participants in these discussions—Gaspar Pallavicino, Cesare Gonzaga, and Roberto da Bari—observing that Fortune often prevents us from completing our designs. The members of the court continue their discussion of the courtier, and Signor Ottaviano suggests that the activities of the courtier must have a praiseworthy purpose.]

5. "The aim, therefore, of the perfect courtier (which up to now we have not mentioned) is, I believe, to win for himself, by means of the qualities ascribed to him by these gentlemen, the goodwill and mind of that prince whom he serves, so that he may be able to tell him (and always will tell him) the truth about everything he needs to know without fear or danger of displeasing him; and when he knows that the mind of the prince is inclined to do something unsuitable, that he may

dare to contradict him, and in a gentle way, avail himself of the favor acquired with his excellent accomplishments, so as to deter him from every evil purpose and lead him to the path of virtue. And thus, while having within himself the goodness these gentlemen ascribed to him along with readiness of wit and charm, prudence and knowledge of letters and of many other things, the courtier will in every situation possess the skill to make his prince see how much honor and profit will come to him and his family from the justice, liberality, magnanimity, gentleness, and other virtues that are proper to a good prince; and, on the contrary, how much infamy and injury proceed from the vices opposed to these virtues. Therefore, I think that just as music, festivals, games, and other pleasant circumstances are, as it were, the flower, so to lead or help one's prince toward the good and frighten him away from the evil is the true fruit of courtiership. And because the merit of good deeds consists mainly in two things, one of which is to choose a truly good end to which we can direct our intentions, and the other of which is to know how to find timely and suitable means in order to attain that good end, it is certain that the man who sees to it that his prince is deceived by no one, listens to no flatterers or slanderers or liars, and is well acquainted with good and evil, loving the one and hating the other, is aiming at the best end of all."⁵⁵

* * *

[After their discussion of the courtier's true purpose and how the prince can be taught to love the good and to do it, they examine what kind of government is best. Ottaviano also argues that although the courtier instructs the prince, he is not necessarily of greater dignity, since, after all, Plato and Aristotle performed their works of courtiership with Alexander the Great and the tyrants of Sicily. Finally Gasparo remembers that in their discussion of the preceding evening, they wished the courtier to be in love, and he wonders how this can be fitting, especially if he is an older man. Messer Pietro Bembo is asked by the Duchess to explain courtly love.]

51. Then, Messer Pietro, having at first kept silent, composing himself as if he were about to speak of something important, said: "Gentlemen, in order to show that old men can love not only without blame but sometimes more happily than the young, I shall have to present a short discourse explaining what love is and what is the nature of the happiness that lovers experience; so, I beg you to listen to me attentively, because I hope to make you see that there is no man here to

whom it is unseemly to be in love, even though he may be fifteen or twenty years older than Signor Morello."⁵⁶

And then, after some laughter from the company, Messer Pietro added: "Let me say, therefore, that, according to the way it is defined by ancient sages, love is nothing other than a certain desire to enjoy beauty, and because our desire longs only for things that are known, knowledge must always precede desire, which by its nature wants the good but is in itself blind and does not know the good. Therefore, nature has so ordained that to every cognitive power there will be joined an appetitive power; and since there are three modes of knowledge in our soul, that is, by means of the senses, by reason, and by intellect, so from the senses arise the appetites, which we have in common with the animals; from reason arises choice, which is proper to man; from the intellect, through which man can share in the nature of the angels, arises will."⁵⁷ Thus, accordingly, just as the senses know only sensible things, appetite desires these things only; and just as the intellect is turned to nothing but the contemplation of intelligible things, the will feeds only upon spiritual goods. Man, rational by nature, and placed in the middle between these two extremes, can, by choice, descending to the senses or rising toward the intellect, turn his desire now in one direction, now in the other. In either of these ways, therefore, man can long for beauty, the concept of which is appropriate to all things, whether natural or artificial, that are made up with that good proportion and due measure required by their nature.

52. "But speaking of the beauty we have in mind, that only which appears in the human body and chiefly in the face, and which prompts this ardent desire we call love, we shall argue that it is an influx of the divine goodness, which, although it is diffused over all created things like the light of the sun,"⁵⁸ still, when it finds a face well proportioned and composed of a certain joyous harmony of various colors and enhanced by light and shadow and a prescribed symmetry and definition, infuses itself therein and appears most beautiful, and adorns and illuminates with a grace and a wonderful splendor the object wherein it shines, in the manner of a sunbeam which strikes a beautiful vase of polished gold set with precious gems. In this way, it pleasantly attracts the eyes of men to itself, and penetrating through them, impresses itself upon the soul, which it moves and delights throughout with a new sweetness; and by kindling it, it inspires it to desire itself.

"Then being seized with the desire to enjoy this beauty as something good, the soul, if it allows itself to be guided by the judgment of the senses, makes a very serious error and judges that the body in which the

beauty is seen is its principal cause, and because of this, it deems it necessary, in order to enjoy this beauty, to join itself as intimately as possible to that body, which is wrong; and therefore, whoever thinks he will enjoy beauty by possessing the body deceives himself and is moved not by true knowledge through rational choice but by false opinion through sensual appetite; whence, the pleasure that ensues from it is also necessarily false and defective. Consequently, all those lovers who satisfy their unchaste desires with the women they love encounter one of two evils: for either, as soon as they have reached the desired goal, they not only feel satiety and disgust, but they can also develop hatred for the beloved object, as if appetite repented of its error and recognized how it was deceived by the false judgment of the senses, through which it believed that evil is good; or else, they remain in the same state of desire and eagerness, like those who have not really reached the end they were seeking; and although, through their own blind approach with which they have become intoxicated, they think they are feeling pleasure at that moment, just as a sick man dreams that he is drinking at some clear spring, still, they are not satisfied, nor are they calm. And because peace and satisfaction always arise from possessing the desired good in the soul of the possessor, if that were the true and good end of their desire, they would remain tranquil and satisfied upon possessing it, but they do not; on the contrary, deceived by that similarity, they quickly return to their unbridled desire, and with the same turmoil they felt before, they find themselves once again with that furious and burning thirst for what in vain they hope to possess perfectly. Such lovers as these, therefore, love most unhappily, for either they never attain their desires, which is a source of great unhappiness, or if they do attain them, they find that they have attained their sorrow, and their miseries end up by becoming even greater; because both in the beginning and in the middle of this love, they never feel anything other than suffering, torment, pain, toil, and hardship; so that to be pale, dejected, constantly weeping and sighing, to be always silent or lamenting, to long for death, in short, to be most unhappy, are the conditions that are said to be proper to lovers.

53. "The cause, therefore, of this calamity in man's soul is principally the senses, which are most potent in youth, because the vigor of the flesh and blood during that stage of life give them as much strength as it takes away from reason, and thus easily induces the soul to follow appetite; for finding itself buried in an earthly prison and deprived of spiritual contemplation, the soul cannot of itself clearly perceive the truth when carrying out the function of governing the body; wherefore, in order to have knowledge of things, it has to go begging for it to the

senses for its first notions, and so it believes the senses and bows down before them and allows itself to be guided by them, particularly when they are so vigorous that they almost force it; and because the senses are so deceptive, they fill it with errors and false opinions.

"For this reason, it nearly always happens that young men are wrapped up in this sensual love which is in every way a rebel against reason, and so they make themselves unworthy of enjoying the graces and benefits which love gives to its true subjects; nor do they feel any pleasures in love except for the same ones that unreasoning animals feel, though their sufferings are much more painful.

"Given this premise, therefore, which is a most valid one, let me say that the contrary happens to those who are at a more mature stage of life. For if the latter, when the soul is already less oppressed by the weight of the body and when the natural ardor begins to cool off, are inflamed by beauty and direct their desire to it, guided by rational choice, they are not deceived then and they manage to acquire perfect possession of beauty; thus, nothing but good arises from the possession of it, because beauty is good, and, consequently, true love of beauty is most good and holy and always produces good effects in the souls of those who, with the bridle of reason, restrain the wickedness of the senses—something which the old can do much more easily than the young.

54. "It is not, therefore, unreasonable to say also that the old can love without blame and more happily than the young; without taking this word 'old,' however, in the sense of 'decrepit' or as when the organs of the body are already so weak that the soul cannot exercise its powers through them, but as meaning when knowledge in us is in its true prime. I will not be silent about this as well: while I think that sensual love is bad at every age, I feel that in the young it deserves to be excused, and perhaps in some sense, it is permissible; for, even if it brings them suffering, danger, hardship, and that unhappiness we have mentioned, there are still many who, to win the favor of the ladies they love, do worthy things which, although they are not directed to a good end, are still in themselves good; and thus, from much bitterness they extract a little sweetness, and through the adversities which they endure they eventually recognize their error. So, just as I think that those youths who control their appetites and love with reason are heroic, I likewise excuse those who allow themselves to be overcome by sensual love, to which they are so inclined by human weakness, provided that in this love they show tenderness, courtesy, and worthiness, and all the other noble qualities that these gentlemen have mentioned and that when they are no longer young, they abandon it altogether, renouncing this sensual

desire as the lowest rung on that ladder by which one can ascend to true love.⁵⁹ But if even when they are old, they keep the fire of the appetites in their cold hearts and subject strong reason to the weak senses, it is not possible to say how much they should be blamed, for, like senseless fools, they deserve to be numbered among the animals that lack reason, for the thoughts and ways of sensual love are most unseemly to a mature stage of life."

* * *

[Bembo pauses and there is a brief discussion among the group about old men loving in a purely intellectual fashion. Signor Morello wonders how it is possible to possess beauty without a body, especially among young men. In paragraph 57, Bembo explains that "beauty springs from God and is like a circle, the center of which is goodness. And hence as there cannot be a circle without a center, there cannot be beauty without goodness. Thus, a wicked soul rarely inhabits a beautiful body, and for that reason, external beauty is a true sign of inner goodness; and that grace is imprinted upon the bodies more or less according to the character of the soul, by which it is recognized outwardly, just as with trees in which the beauty of the blossoms bears witness to the goodness of the fruit; and the same principle operates in bodies, for we see that the physiognomists often recognize in the face the habits and sometimes the thoughts of men." Bembo continues in 58: "Hence, the ugly are for the most part also wicked and the beautiful good; and it can be said that beauty is the graceful, merry, pleasing, and desirable face of the good, and ugliness the dark, troublesome, displeasing, and wretched face of evil; and if you consider all things, you will find that those which are good and useful always have the grace of beauty as well." After discussing the beauty and harmony of the created world, Bembo describes man as a microcosm: "Think now of the figure of man, who may be called a little world, in whom it is obvious that every part of the body is precisely designed with skill and not by chance, and then the form taken as a whole is so beautiful that it would be difficult to decide whether it is utility or grace which is given more to the human face and the rest of the body by its various parts, such as the eyes, nose, mouth, ears, arms, chest, and all the other parts. The same can be said of all the animals. Look at the feathers of birds, the leaves and branches of trees, which nature gives them to preserve their being, and yet they also have the greatest loveliness." Bembo next compares men to the building of ships, palaces, or temples in which both beauty and utility are essential. He concludes that "beauty is the true trophy of the soul's victory, when, with divine strength she holds sway over material nature and with her

light conquers the darkness of the body." After a discussion concerning the extent of chastity in beautiful women, Bembo continues his discussion of how the courtier ought to love "beyond the manner of the vulgar crowd."]

61. "... I say, therefore, that since human nature in its period of youth is so greatly inclined toward the senses, the courtier may be allowed to love sensually while he is young, but if in later years he happens to be inflamed by such an amorous desire, he must be very cautious and take care not to deceive himself by letting himself be led into those calamities which in the young deserve more compassion than blame, and, on the contrary, in the old more blame than compassion.

62. "Therefore, when the graceful appearance of some beautiful woman presents itself to his eye, joined to such elegant behavior and gentle manners that he, as an expert in love, recognizes that his feeling accords with hers, and as soon as he perceives that his eyes seize upon her image and carry it to his heart, and when his soul begins to contemplate her with pleasure and to feel that influence within itself that moves and warms it little by little, and as soon as those lively spirits which shine forth through her eyes continue to add new fuel to the fire, then he must, at the beginning, provide a prompt remedy, and arouse his reason and therewith arm the fortress of his heart, thus closing the pathways to the senses and appetites so that they cannot enter there either by force or by deception. Thus, if the flame is extinguished, the danger, too, is extinguished, but if it persists and grows, then the courtier, feeling himself caught, must be utterly resolved to avoid all the ugliness of vulgar love and must enter into the divine path of love with reason as his guide. And he must first consider that the body, wherein that beauty shines, is not the source from which it springs, but rather, that beauty, being an incorporeal thing and, as we have said, a heavenly ray, loses much of its dignity when it is joined with base and corruptible matter, because the more perfect it is, the less it partakes of matter and is most perfect when it is completely separated from it; and he must also consider that just as one cannot hear with his palate or smell with his ears, so also one cannot enjoy beauty in any way or satisfy the desire that it excites in our souls through the sense of touch, but only by means of that sense of which beauty is the true object, namely, the faculty of sight.

"Let him, therefore, remove himself from the blind judgment of the senses and enjoy with his eyes that splendor, that grace, those amorous sparks, the smiles, the manners, and all the other pleasant ornaments of

his lady's beauty; likewise, with his hearing let him enjoy the sweetness of her voice, the modulations of her words, the harmony of her music (if the beloved lady is a musician); and thus, his soul will nourish itself on the sweetest food by means of these two senses—which contain little of the corporeal and are the ministers of reason—without allowing desire for the body to arouse in him any unchaste appetite. Then, let him obey, please, and honor his lady with all reverence and hold her dearer than himself, and put her every convenience and pleasure before his own, and love in her the beauty of the mind no less than that of her body; let him, therefore, take care not to allow her to fall into any error, but with admonishments and good precepts let him seek always to lead her to modesty, temperance, and true chastity, and make certain that in her no thoughts arise except those that are pure and free of all the ugliness of vice; and thus, by sowing virtue in the garden of that beautiful mind, he will also gather fruits of the most beautiful behavior and will taste them with wondrous delight; and this will be the true engendering and expression of beauty in beauty, which is said by some to be the end of love.

"In such a way, our courtier will be most pleasing to his lady, and she will always show herself obedient, sweet, and affable to him, and as desirous of pleasing him as of being loved by him; and the wishes of both will be most virtuous and harmonious and, consequently, they will both be very happy."

63. Here, Signor Morello said: "The begetting of beauty in beauty effectively would be the begetting of a beautiful child in a beautiful woman; and pleasing him in this would appear to me a much clearer sign that she loved her lover than through that affability of which you were speaking."

Bembo laughed and said: "You must not go beyond proper bounds, Signor Morello, nor does the woman give little indication of her love, when she gives the lover her beauty, which is so precious a thing, and by the paths that are the gateway to the soul (that is, sight and hearing) sends the glances of her eyes, the image of her face, her voice, her words, which penetrate into the lover's heart and give him proof of her love."

Signor Morello replied: "Glances and words can be and often are false evidence; therefore, anyone who has no better token of love is, in my judgment, most uncertain; and truly I was expecting you to make this lady of yours a little more courteous and liberal toward the courtier than the Magnifico has made his own, but it seems to me that both of you are acting in the same way as those judges who pronounce sentences against their friends in order to appear wise."

64. Bembo answered: "I am quite willing for this lady to be more courteous to my courtier who is no longer young than the Magnifico's is to the younger one, and with reason, because my courtier will only desire seemly things, and therefore, the lady can, without blame, grant them all to him, but Signor Magnifico's lady, who is not so sure of the young courtier's modesty, must grant him only seemly things and deny him the unseemly ones; therefore, my courtier, who is granted what he requests, is happier than the other to whom part is granted and part denied."

"And so that you may understand better that rational love is happier than sensual love, let me say that sometimes the same things should be denied in sensual love and granted in rational love, because they are unseemly in the one and seemly in the other; therefore, to please her good lover, besides granting him pleasant smiles, intimate and secret discussions, and permission to joke, jest, and touch her hand, the lady may reasonably without blame go even as far as the kiss, which in sensual love, according to the Magnifico's rules, is not permitted; for, since the kiss is the union of the body and soul, there is the danger that the sensual lover may be more inclined toward the body than toward the soul, whereas the rational lover knows that although the mouth is part of the body, it nonetheless gives rise to words which are the interpreters of the soul as well as to that inward breath which itself is even called 'soul.' And for that reason, the lover delights in joining his mouth to that of his beloved in a kiss, not in order to excite in himself any unseemly desire, but because he feels that bond is the mutual gateway to their souls, into which, drawn by the desire for each other, they pour themselves by turn, each into the other's body, and mingle together in such a way that each of them has two souls, and a single soul thus composed of these two rules, as it were, two bodies; whence the kiss may more readily be said to be a union of souls rather than of bodies, because it exerts such power over the soul that it draws it to itself and almost separates it from the body. For this reason, all chaste lovers desire the kiss as a union of souls, and thus the divinely enamored Plato says that in kissing, the soul came to his lips in order to escape from the body. And because the separation of the soul from perceptible things to the senses and its complete union with spiritual things can be signified by the kiss, Solomon, in his divine book of the *Song of Songs*, says, 'Let him kiss me with the kiss of his mouth,' to explain his desire that his soul be transported by divine love to the contemplation of heavenly beauty in such a way that by uniting itself intimately with that love, it might abandon the body."

65. All remained most attentive to Bembo's discourse, and he, pausing briefly and seeing that the others were not speaking, said: "Since

you have made me begin to show the nature of truly happy love to our courtier who is not young, I want to lead him a little further still, for it is very dangerous to remain at this point, considering that, as we have said several times, the soul is most inclined toward the senses; and although reason may choose well through proper argument and know that such beauty does not originate in the body and, on that account, put a bridle on unseemly desires, still the continual contemplation of physical beauty often perverts sound judgment. And even if no other evil results from this, remaining absent from the loved one brings with it much distress, because the influence of that beauty, when it is present, gives the lover wondrous delight, and by warming his heart, awakens and melts certain dormant and frozen powers in his soul, which, being nourished by the amorous warmth, spread and well up around the heart and send forth through the eyes those spirits that are most subtle vapors, made of the purest and brightest part of the blood which receive the image of her beauty and shape it with a thousand various ornaments. As a result, the soul takes delight, and, with a certain wonder it is frightened and yet rejoices, and, as if dazed, it feels, together with enjoyment, that fear and reverence which we are accustomed to have for sacred things, and it believes it has entered into its own paradise.

66. "Therefore, the lover who considers beauty only in the body loses this good and this happiness as soon as the beloved lady, by being absent, leaves his eyes deprived of their splendor and, consequently, the soul widowed of its good. For since her beauty is far away, that amorous influence does not warm his heart as it did in her presence, wherefore his pores remain arid and dry, yet the memory of her beauty still stirs those powers of his soul a little, so that they seek to scatter the spirits, and these, finding the ways blocked, have no outlet, and yet seek to escape; and shut in this way, they prick the soul with these goads and cause it the most bitter pains, as children experience when their teeth begin to come through the tender gums. And from this come the tears, the sighs, the suffering, and the torments of lovers, because the soul is in constant torment and distress and almost in a furor until that dear beauty appears to it once again; and then suddenly it becomes calm and breathes easily and, entirely intent on that beauty, it nourishes itself on sweet food, nor would it ever wish to depart from so enticing a vision.

"In order, therefore, to escape the torment of this absence and to enjoy beauty without suffering, the courtier, with the aid of reason, must turn his desire completely away from the body and to beauty alone, and insofar as he is able, contemplate it in its own simplicity and purity, and give it a shape distinct from all matter in his imagination; and thus he

will make it pleasing and dear to his soul, and there enjoy it and have it with him day and night in every time and place without fear of ever losing it, remembering always that the body is something very different from beauty which not only does not increase beauty but diminishes its perfection.

"In this way, our courtier who is no longer young will be out of reach of all the bitterness and calamities that the young almost always feel in the form of jealousy, suspicion, disdain, anger, desperation, and certain furors full of such rage that they are often led into such error that some not only beat the women they love, but take their own lives; he will do no injury to the husband, father, brothers, or relatives of the lady he loves; he will never cause her shame; he will never be forced to curb, sometimes with the greatest difficulty, his eyes and tongue in order not to disclose his desires to others, or to endure the pain of partings or absences; for he will always carry his precious treasure with him enclosed in his heart and will also by the power of imagination make that beauty far more beautiful than it is in reality.

67. "But among these blessings the lover will find another much greater still, if he will use this love as a step by which to ascend to a love far more sublime; this he will succeed in doing if he continually considers within himself how tight a bond it is always having to contemplate the beauty of one body alone; and so in order to go beyond such narrow limits, he will add to his idea of beauty little by little so many adornments that by uniting all forms of beauty, he will create a universal concept and reduce the multitude of these individual beauties to the unity of that single beauty which sheds its light over human nature as a whole. Thus, he will no longer contemplate the particular beauty of one woman but rather that universal beauty which adorns all bodies; and so, dazzled by this greater light, he will not be concerned with the lesser one, and burning in a more perfect flame, he will put little value on what he had at first so greatly prized.

"This degree of love, although it is very noble and such that few can attain it, can still not be called perfect, for the imagination is a corporeal faculty and has no knowledge if not through those principles that are provided to it by the senses, and so it is not wholly purged of material darkness, and, hence, although it may consider this universal beauty in the abstract and in itself alone, yet it does not discern that beauty clearly or without some ambiguity, because of the similarity that the mental images have with the body; thus, those who attain this love are like little birds beginning to grow feathers, which, although with their weak wings

can lift themselves a little in flight, still dare not go too far from their nest or expose themselves to the winds and open sky.

68. "Therefore, when our courtier shall have reached this goal, although he may be called a very happy lover in comparison with those who are submerged in the misery of sensual love, still I do not wish him to be content, but rather to go boldly forward along that sublime path, following behind the guide that leads him to the goal of true happiness; and, thus, instead of going outside himself in thought, as anyone must who wishes to consider corporeal beauty, let him turn within himself to contemplate that beauty, seen with the eyes of the mind, which begins to become sharp and clear when those of the body lose the flower of their delight; and in this way, estranged from all evil, purified by the study of true philosophy, immersed in the spiritual life, and trained in the things of the intellect, the soul, turning itself to the contemplation of its own substance, as if awakened from the profoundest sleep, opens those eyes which all have but few utilize and perceives in itself a ray of that light which is the true image of the angelic beauty imparted to it, and of which it, in turn, imparts a faint image to the body.

"Thus, once grown blind to earthly things, the soul has eyes only for celestial things; and sometimes when the motive powers of the body are abstracted by assiduous contemplation, or are bound by sleep, then, no longer fettered by them, the soul senses a certain hidden savor of true angelic beauty, and, ravished by the splendor of that light, begins to be inflamed and follows it so eagerly that it becomes, as it were, drunk and beside itself in its desire to unite with that beauty, believing to have found the footprint of God in the contemplation of which, as in its blessed end, it seeks to find its final rest. And so, burning with this most happy flame, it rises to its noblest part, which is the intellect; and there, no longer darkened by the obscure night of earthly things, it beholds divine beauty; but it still does not yet quite enjoy that beauty wholly and perfectly, because it only contemplates it in its own particular intellect, which is not capable of comprehending universal beauty in its immensity.

"Wherefore, not fully content with bestowing this benefit, love bestows a greater happiness upon the soul; for, just as from the particular beauty of one body it guides the soul to the universal beauty of all bodies, so in the highest grade of perfection, it guides the soul from the particular intellect to the universal intellect. Hence, the soul, burning in the holy fire of true divine love, flies to unite itself with the angelic nature and not only wholly abandons the senses, but no longer has any need of the discourse of reason, for, transformed into an angelic being, it understands all intelligible things, and without any veil or cloud beholds the

wide sea of pure divine beauty and receives it into itself and enjoys that supreme happiness that by way of the senses is incomprehensible.

69. "If, then, the beauties which we see every day with these clouded eyes of ours in corruptible bodies (and which are nothing but dreams and the faintest shadows of beauty) seem to us so lovely and graceful that they often kindle a most ardent fire in us and one of such delight that we deem no happiness capable of equaling what we sometimes feel at a single glance that comes to us from the eyes of a lady we love—what happy wonder then, what blessed awe must we think is that which fills the soul when it attains the vision of divine beauty! What sweet fire, what delightful burning must we believe that to be which springs from the fountain of supreme and true beauty, the source of every other beauty which never increases or diminishes: always beautiful and in itself most simple and equal in every part, like only to itself, and partaking of none other, but so beautiful that all other beautiful things are beautiful because they derive their beauty from it.

"This is that beauty, indistinguishable from the highest good, which by its light calls and draws all things to itself and not only gives intellect to intellectual things, reason to rational things, sense and the desire to live to sensual things, but also transmits to plants and to stones motion and that natural instinct peculiar to them, as a vestige of itself. Therefore, this love is as much greater and happier than the others as the cause that moves it is more excellent; and so, just as material fire refines gold, so this most sacred fire in our souls destroys and consumes what is mortal therein and quickens and beautifies that celestial part which in the soul was at first deadened and buried by the senses. This is the pyre on which, the poets write, Hercules was burned at the summit of Mount Oeta and through whose burning he became divine and immortal after death; this is the chariot of Elias which doubles the grace and happiness in the souls of those who are worthy to see it when they depart from this earthly baseness and fly toward Heaven.

"Therefore, let us direct all thoughts and powers of our soul to this most sacred light which shows us the path that leads to Heaven; and following after it and divesting ourselves of the human passions in which we were clothed when we fell, let us ascend by the ladder which bears the imprint of sensual beauty at its lowest rung, to the sublime place where heavenly, gracious, and true beauty dwells, which lies hidden in the innermost secret recesses of God, so that profane eyes cannot behold it. And here we shall find a most happy end to our desires, true rest from our labors, a sure remedy to our miseries, a wholesome medicine for our

infirmities, and the safest port away from the dark storms of this life's tempestuous sea.

70. "O most holy Love, what mortal tongue, then, can praise you worthily? Most beautiful, most good, most wise, you flow from the union of beauty and goodness, and there in that union you dwell, and by that union you return to it there, as in a circle. Sweetest bond of the universe midway between celestial and terrestrial things, with gracious disposition and just proportion, you direct the celestial powers to govern the lower ones and, turning the minds of mortals back to their source, you join them to it. You unite the elements in harmony, move nature to produce, and move whatever is born to the continuation of life. You join things that are separate, give perfection to the imperfect, likeness to the unlike, friendship to the hostile, fruit to the earth, calm to the sea, vital light to the heavens. You are father of true pleasures, of all grace, of peace, of gentleness and benevolence, enemy of rude cruelty and vileness—in short, you are the beginning and end of all good. And because you delight in residing in the flower of beautiful bodies and souls and from there sometimes consent to reveal yourself a little to the eyes and minds of those who are worthy of seeing you, I believe that you now dwell among us.

"Deign, then, O Lord, to hear our prayers, infuse yourself in our hearts and with the splendor of your most sacred fire illuminate our darkness and like a faithful guide, in this blind maze, show us the true path. Correct the falsity of our senses and after our long delirium give us the true and substantial good; make us savor those spiritual odors that quicken the powers of the intellect and hear the celestial harmony with such accord that discord of passion may no longer exist in us; intoxicate us at that inexhaustible fountain of contentment that always delights, never satiates, and always gives a taste of true blessedness to anyone who drinks from its living and limpid waters; with the rays of your light purge our eyes of dark ignorance so that they no longer value mortal beauty but know that the things they first seemed to see are not and that those they did not see truly are. Accept our souls which are offered to you in sacrifice; burn them in that living flame which consumes all material ugliness so that, wholly separated from the body, they may be united with divine beauty in an everlasting and most sweet bond, and that we, being separated from ourselves, may, like true lovers, be able to become one with the beloved, and rising up beyond the earth, be admitted to the banquet of angels, where, nourished on ambrosia and immortal nectar, we may at last die a most happy death in life, as did

those ancient fathers whose souls you seized by the most ardent power of contemplation from the body, and unite with God."

71. Having spoken thus far with so much vehemence that he seemed almost in a trance and beside himself, Bembo remained quiet and immobile, keeping his eyes turned toward Heaven, as if enraptured. And then Signora Emilia, who along with the others had been very attentively listening to his discourse, took the hem of his robe and, shaking him a little, said: "Take care, Messer Pietro, that with these thoughts your soul, too, does not part from your body."

"Madam," replied Messer Pietro, "that would not be the first miracle that love has worked in me."⁶⁰

* * *

[Afterward, the others urge Bembo to continue, but he says he no longer feels inspired. Signor Gasparo asserts that this path to happiness will be difficult for men and impossible for women. Then they propose that Bembo address the question of whether or not women are as capable of divine love for the next evening, when they all discover to their great surprise that it is already dawn, and the book ends with them going to their chambers, still reflecting upon Signor Gasparo's attitude toward women.]

NOTES

1. Dom Miguel da Silva (c. 1480-1556), to whom the book was dedicated, was a Portuguese nobleman and cleric who served as an ambassador to Popes Leo X, Adrian VI, and Clement VII in Rome, where he became friends with Castiglione. He earned a certain reputation for his writings and was made a cardinal in 1541.

2. Guidobaldo of Montefeltro (1472-1508), the son of Federico of Montefeltro (1422-82) and Battista Sforza, succeeded his father as Duke of Urbino in 1482. He married Elisabetta Gonzaga in 1486 but had no children. He adopted his nephew Francesco Maria della Rovere (1490-1538) as his heir in 1504. Francesco inherited the duchy in 1508 upon Guidobaldo's death.

3. Vittoria della Colonna (1492-1547) was the wife of the Marquis of Pescara and a renowned poetess and woman of letters who exchanged lyrics with Michelangelo.

4. This elegiac enumeration of his dead friends includes Alfonso Ariosto (1475-1525), distantly related to the poet Ludovico Ariosto. Alfonso was apparently the one who encouraged Castiglione to write his *Book of the Courtier* at the suggestion of Francis I of France. The book was originally dedicated to Alfonso, who was himself a model courtier. At his death, the book was rededicated to da Silva.

5. Giuliano de' Medici (1479-1516) resided for lengthy periods of time at the court of Urbino while the Medici were exiled from Florence (1494-1512). The youngest son of Lorenzo de' Medici, Il Magnifico, he was made Duke of Nemours by Francis I of France. Niccolò Machiavelli originally dedicated *The Prince* to Giuliano but was forced to change the dedication after his death in 1516 (see note 1 to *The Prince*).

6. Bernardo Dovizi da Bibbiena (1470-1520) served Giovanni de' Medici, Giuliano's brother, who made him a cardinal after his election to the papacy as Leo X. Bibbiena's influence on Leo was so profound that he became known as "the other Pope." A patron of Raphael and a friend of Castiglione, he was also the writer of one of the new comedies imitative of Plautus, *La Calandria*.

7. A nobleman and politician from Genoa, Ottaviano Fregoso (1470-1524), like Giuliano de' Medici, sought refuge in Urbino, where he was exiled from his native city in 1497. After serving Francesco Maria della Rovere as ambassador to

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France, he was elected Doge of Genoa in 1513 and had French protection until 1522, when he was taken prisoner by the Marquis of Pescara. He died in exile.

8. Elisabetta Gonzaga (1471-1526), the second daughter of the Marquis Federico Gonzaga of Mantua, married Duke Guidobaldo in 1489. She was greatly admired for her elegance, wit, strength, and virtue. Because of her husband's poor health, she was a dominant figure at the court of Urbino.

9. Castiglione refers here to Plato's *Republic*, Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*, and Cicero's *De oratore*.

10. Federico of Montefeltro (1422-82), famous for military skill, his wise rule, and his love of arts and letters, was in 1474 made Duke of Urbino and Captain General of the church by Pope Sixtus IV. His wife, Battista Sforza, niece of Duke Francesco Sforza of Milan, gave him several daughters and one son, Guidobaldo. He built the enchantingly beautiful palace of Urbino, where the *Book of the Courtier* takes place.

11. Alfonso II of Aragon (1448-95), the Duke of Calabria, became King of Naples in 1494.

12. Ferdinand II of Aragon (1469-96) was King of Naples.

13. Pope Alexander VI (1431-1503) was elected in 1492. The former Rodrigo Borgia, a Spanish cardinal, Alexander VI was the father of the famous Borgia discussed in Machiavelli's *The Prince*.

14. Pope Julius II (1443-1513), Giuliano della Rovere, was elected Pope in 1503 and was known as the "warrior pope" as well as a famous patron of the arts. Michelangelo painted the Sistine Chapel for Julius.

15. Emilia Pia (d. 1528), born the daughter of Marco Pio of Carpi, lived in Urbino after the death of her husband, Antonio da Montefeltro (a natural brother of Guidobaldo), as the duchess's constant companion. Like her mistress, she was known for her wit, gaiety, and virtue.

16. Federico Fregoso (1480-1541), younger brother of Ottaviano and nephew of Duke Guidobaldo, was a soldier, respected diplomat, courtier, and active politician who first supported and then opposed his brother Ottaviano during his rule in Genoa. Julius II made him Archbishop of Salerno in 1507 and Pope Paul III made him a cardinal in 1539. Federico was a close friend of many writers of the time, including Castiglione, as well as a student of languages.

17. Pietro Bembo (1470-1547) came from a noble Venetian family and lived in Florence as a child. An authority on language, style, and platonic love, and a poet in the Petrarchan tradition, Bembo was one of the most respected men of letters in the Renaissance. He spent the years between 1506 and 1512 at the court of Urbino. He moved to Rome and became a papal secretary for Pope Leo X in 1512 and was made a cardinal in 1539. He corrected the proofs for the *Book of the Courtier*.

18. Cesare Gonzaga (1475-1512) was related to the Gonzaga family of Mantua and a cousin of Castiglione. Reputed a man of great valor, he served the rulers of Urbino as a soldier and diplomat. His friendship with Castiglione and Bembo was very strong and close.

19. Count Ludovico da Canossa (1476-1532) came from a noble family of

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Verona and was a close friend and relation of Castiglione. From 1496 on, he spent time at the court of Urbino and served first the papacy, then King Francis I of France as a diplomat. A man of notable ability and culture, he was also a friend of Erasmus and Raphael. He became Bishop of Bayeux in 1516.

20. Gasparo Pallavicino (1486–1511) was a Lombard, a descendant of the Marquis of Cortemaggiore, near Piacenza. One of the youngest members of the court, he was always ill and died at an early age.

21. Ludovico Pio (d. 1512) was a distant cousin of Emilia Pia, who probably met Castiglione in Milan. He was a brave soldier and eventually died after being wounded in a battle.

22. Sigismondo Morello da Ortona came from the Abruzzi region and may have belonged to the Ricciardi family. The misogynist of the group, he served Guidobaldo well as a soldier and courtier. He is the only old courtier depicted by Castiglione, and he exhibits an irritability unusual in the other courtiers.

23. Pietro da Napoli briefly appears in the *Book of the Courtier* to tell a joke. Little is known of him, although he apparently accompanied Julius II to Viterbo after the Bologna expedition.

24. Roberto da Bari (d. 1512) belonged to the Massimi family of Bari. A young and elegant courtier, he was another of Castiglione's good friends.

25. Bernardo Accolti (1458–1535) was known as the "Unico Aretino" because he was born in Arezzo, the son of a famous lawyer and historian, Benedetto Accolti, and gained acclaim as a great improviser of poetry in courts from Milan to Naples. He grew to have a rather inflated opinion of his own talents. Both Julius II and Leo X were his patrons.

26. Giancristoforo Romano (c. 1465–1512), a noted sculptor, medal-maker, goldsmith, architect, and musician, visited the court of Urbino in 1506 and 1507.

27. Pietro Monte served Duke Guidobaldo for a time as Master of the Horse in charge of the tournaments. Little is known about him except that his work in Urbino was praiseworthy.

28. Antonio Maria Terpadro, a friend of Bembo and Bibbiena, probably came from Rome and spent time in Urbino at the time Julius II was Pope. He was a singer and a musician, and thus his nickname appropriately recalls Terpadro of Lesbos, the father of Greek classical music and lyric poetry.

29. Niccolò Frisio (or Frigio) was a German friend of Castiglione and Bembo who was a man of culture and a skilled diplomat. In 1510, he retired to a monastery in Naples.

30. The court of Urbino described by Castiglione represents a microcosm of Italian society.

31. Ippolito d'Este (1479–1520), the son of Duke Ercole of Ferrara, was a friend of Leonardo da Vinci and a patron of Ludovico Ariosto. He was made a cardinal by Pope Alexander VI in 1493.

32. A popular buffoon and jester at the papal court.

33. Central to Castiglione's conception of the courtier are the attributes of grace and *sprezzatura*, or nonchalance. Grace (*grazia*) is the key quality of the

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courtier and refers to the harmonious elegance and refinement that Giorgio Vasari viewed as a product of genius. In his *Lives of the Artists*, Vasari describes the style of Raphael as "gracious." Grace is true art which does not seem to be art; it is a special gift which can be enhanced by application and effort, beginning when one is young. The selection of appropriate models to imitate is important, but the complete assimilation of what one learns is crucial (note the simile of the bee gathering nectar that the Count employs in the second paragraph of his response to Messer Cesare). Without grace, all the courtier's actions will be rendered worthless.

34. Galeazzo Sanseverino (d. 1525) served as a military officer for Ludovico Sforza in Milan before being appointed grand equerry by King Louis XII of France in 1506.

35. *Sprezzatura*, or nonchalance, is a term coined by Castiglione to describe the ability to conceal all effort or art in one's words or actions, an ability without which the courtier cannot achieve true grace. Castiglione uses the word *disinvoltura*, "ease," as a synonym. The courtier must always appear natural.

36. The feeling of wonder, *meraviglia*, on the part of the onlooker is the result of seeing the courtier's true grace.

37. A gentleman at the court of Urbino who has never been completely identified.

38. Monseigneur d'Angoulême (1494–1547) became King Francis I of France in 1515 and was a great patron of the arts and letters.

39. Alexander the Great (356–323 B.C.); his regard for Homer was noted by Plutarch in his *Parallel Lives*.

40. Aristotle (384–322 B.C.) was a pupil of Plato and tutor of Alexander the Great.

41. Alcibiades (c. 450–404 B.C.), the Athenian general and politician, was the pupil and friend of Socrates. See Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*.

42. Socrates (469–399 B.C.) was the most famous Greek philosopher; his ideas are known mainly through the works of Plato and Xenophon. He was put to death by the state for sedition but came to be idealized for his virtue and honesty.

43. Scipio Africanus the Younger (d. 129 B.C.), or Scipio Aemilianus, conquered Carthage in 146 B.C., completing the efforts of Scipio Africanus the Elder (237–183 B.C.), who had defeated Hannibal at Zama. Polybius tells us that the younger Scipio was worthy of the great Africanus (he was his adopted grandson) in his virtue, courage, vigor, and intellect. He was a patron of the arts and of such writers as the playwright Plautus and the philosopher Panaetius.

44. The Greek historian Xenophon (c. 430–c. 355 B.C.) wrote the *Cyropaedia* (*The Education of Cyrus*), a moralistic account of the life of Cyrus the Great, King of Persia, which influenced generations of readers and writers. Machiavelli uses Cyrus as an example of a worthy prince (see *The Prince*, chapter 6) who acquired power by his own skill and not as a result of fortune's fickle favor.

45. To bolster his claim that a courtier should study the humanities, the Count refers to various great military leaders in these paragraphs. This list of other great Roman generals and political figures includes Lucullus (106–57

B.C.), Lucius Cornelius Sulla (138–78 B.C.), Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus (Pompey the Great, 106–48 B.C.), and Marcus Junius Brutus (c.85–42 B.C.). All were known variously for military skills, humanistic learning, devotion to old Roman virtues, and courage.

46. Hannibal (247–183 B.C.) was the Carthaginian general defeated by Scipio Africanus at the battle of Zama in 203 B.C. near Carthage. Trained as a leader from an early age by his father, Hamilcar Barca, he was thoughtful and shrewd in his dealings with the Romans, who thought him exceedingly cruel.

47. Aristippus (c.435–356 B.C.), a friend and student of Socrates, is known as the founder of the Cyrenaic School of hedonism; he lived and taught at the court of Dionysius, the ruler of Syracuse in Sicily.

48. Achilles, the son of Peleus, King of Phthia, and a sea goddess, Thetis, was educated by Phoenix, who taught him to speak well and fight bravely, and by Chiron, who taught him the art of healing. As the hero of Homer's epic poem the *Iliad*, he reveals intelligence, courage, and intense feelings. His anger is the subject of the poem, but he is also loyal and even wise in dealing with others.

49. Grasso ("Fatso") was the nickname given to a man in the service of the Medici family. He was well known in Urbino.

50. Vincenzo Colli, Il Calmeta (d. 1508), was a poet and writer from Castelnova.

51. Bernardo goes beyond the traditional definitions of man as a supremely rational animal or a sinful one to characterize the human being as a risibile animal. Laughter plays an important part in his society.

52. The numeral VI could be read as the ablative form of Latin *vis*, which means "force," "might," or "violence." The play on words suggests that Alexander VI became Pope by violence or *vi*.

53. These comments on two worthy popes, Nicholas V, a saintly man and theologian, and the gentle and good Pius III, seem rather harsh. Perhaps *Nihil Papa Valet*, "The Pope is capable of nothing," refers to Pius' kindness and the brevity of his reign.

54. In the third book, Magnifico Giuliano defends women against the misogyny of Gasparo Pallavicino.

55. In Book IV, Ottaviano questions the goals of the courtier in the previous book and offers a new goal with a social purpose. Through the proper education, a courtier can come to know the good and the true.

56. Bembo published the *Asolani* in 1505; it contained, in Book III, the first literary expression of Neoplatonist views which became the common property of artists, courtiers, and writers. The classical source of these views was Plato's *Symposium*, but, in Marsilio Ficino's translation and commentary (written in 1469 and published in 1484 in Latin), "platonic" love was introduced into the European vocabulary. Ficino views this emotion not as homosexuality but as an intellectual love between friends based on man's love for God. Love is always aroused by sight, whether it is bestial, human, or divine.

57. Bembo's description of the human soul conforms to the traditional Christian model. In *De Officiis*, Cicero distinguishes between the two essential

activities or forces of the soul: appetite, which "impels a man this way or that"; and reason, "which teaches and explains what should be done."

58. The simile of the sun comes from Plato's *Republic*, Book VI, where he compares the good to the sun. It is also comparable to the illumination experienced by St. Augustine at his conversion in his *Confessions*. Bembo's eloquent concluding speech combines Christian and Platonic images and concepts derived from Plato and works by Ficino and Bembo himself.

59. Bembo's discourse on platonic love is often discussed in terms of the famous metaphor of the "ladder," of which sensual love is only the first step or rung in the ascent to true or divine love.

60. This ironic conclusion raises questions about this ideal love.



NICCOLÒ MACHIAVELLI

1469-1527

NICCOLÒ MACHIAVELLI WAS BORN IN FLORENCE, BUT VERY LITTLE IS KNOWN about his early life before he entered the Florentine Chancery in 1498, where he was to serve the city's republican government until 1512. We do know, however, that Machiavelli's early reading included a copy of Livy's history of republican Rome and that his later characteristic tendency to compare great events or men from the classical past with contemporary affairs must have been born during his childhood readings of the Roman historians. Even though his contribution to modern political theory has always been primarily connected to the influence of his little treatise on the principality, *The Prince* (written in 1513; published posthumously in 1532), Machiavelli was himself an avowed republican and was even imprisoned and tortured in 1513 by the Medici rulers of Florence who overturned the republican government which he served.

In fact, Machiavelli considered *The Prince* an occasional work, one which owed its relevance to fortuitous historical circumstances which characterized the year 1513. At that time, the son of Lorenzo de' Medici, Giovanni de' Medici, was elected to the papacy, taking the title Leo X. The Pope's brother, Giuliano de' Medici, Duke of Nemours, seemed destined to rule Florence and Tuscany. For a brief time, it seemed to Machiavelli that Medici power in Tuscany might unite with Medici control of the papacy to form the nucleus of an Italian alliance (perhaps even a nation-state) to liberate Italy from her "barbarian" invaders. In *The Prince*, much the same kind of situation is described as Machiavelli discusses his prototype for the Renaissance ruler, Cesare Borgia, whose military adventures in central Italy benefited from the control exercised over the papacy by his father, Alexander VI. To employ Machiavelli's own terms, the Medici were presented with a historical opportunity (*occasione*) that constituted a challenge to their ability and ingenuity (*virtù*), a challenge which was the gift of a fleeting fortune (*fortuna*).

In the process of discussing the ideal princely ruler, rather than the form of government closer to his own preferences—that of a republic,

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which he treated in his more lengthy book *The Discourses on the Decades of Livy* (written 1513-19; published posthumously in 1531)—Machiavelli covered a wide range of important philosophical and ethical questions relating to politics. He is most original and most provocative when he deals with the sometimes amoral or immoral means by which power is seized, administered, and lost. A good deal of the appeal of this book lay in its unabashed pragmatism, in Machiavelli's willingness to discuss the dark underside of the nature of power.

As a result of Machiavelli's ventures into such dangerous waters, his reputation has for centuries been colored by attacks upon his morality. Elizabethan England saw in *The Prince* a compendium of maxims fit only for tyrants, and in the nearly four hundred references to Machiavelli in the drama of the period, the terms "Machiavellian" and "Machiavellianism" were introduced into the English language. Not only Protestants condemned the book; Catholics placed it on the Index in 1559. And Machiavelli's first name was even associated with a preexisting nickname for the devil: Old Nick. This *succès de scandale* guaranteed a clamorous reception for the treatise, and, after the Bible, it was probably the most widely read book on the entire European continent during the Renaissance. The style of *The Prince* is still as fresh as when it first appeared in print, and modern commentators still hotly debate the significance of Machiavelli's sometimes shocking definition of the relationship between politics and morality.

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Dedicatory Preface

Niccolò Machiavelli to Lorenzo de' Medici, the Magnificent¹

In most instances, it is customary for those who desire to win the favor of a Prince to present themselves to him with those things they value most or which they feel will most please him; thus, we often see princes given horses, arms, vestments of gold cloth, precious stones, and similar ornaments suited to their greatness. Wishing, therefore, to offer myself to Your Magnificence with some evidence of my devotion to you, I have not found among my belongings anything that I might value more or prize so much as the knowledge of the deeds of great men, which I have learned from a long experience in modern affairs and a continuous study of antiquity; having with great care and for a long time thought about and examined these deeds, and now having set them down in a little book, I am sending them to Your Magnificence.

And although I consider this work unworthy of your station, I am sure, nevertheless, that your humanity will move you to accept it, for there could not be a greater gift from me than to give you the means to be able, in a very brief time, to understand all that I, in many years and with many hardships and dangers, have come to understand and to appreciate. I have neither decorated nor filled this work with fancy sentences, with rich and magnificent words, or with any other form of rhetorical or unnecessary ornamentation which many writers normally use in describing and enriching their subject matter; for I wished that nothing should set my work apart or make it pleasing except the variety of its material and the seriousness of its contents. Neither do I wish that it be thought presumptuous if a man of low and inferior station dares to debate and to regulate the rule of princes; for, just as those who paint landscapes place themselves in a low position on the plain in order to consider the nature of the mountains and the high places and place

*These selections are from Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, ed. Peter Bondanella and trans. Peter Bondanella and Mark Musa (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985).

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themselves high atop mountains in order to study the plains, in like manner, to know well the nature of the people one must be a prince, and to know well the nature of princes one must be of the people.

Accept, therefore, Your Magnificence, this little gift in the spirit that I send it; if you read and consider it carefully, you will discover in it my most heartfelt desire that you may attain that greatness which fortune and all your own capacities promise you. And if Your Magnificence will turn your eyes at some time from the summit of your high position toward these lowlands, you will realize to what degree I unjustly suffer a great and continuous malevolence of fortune.

* * *

[In Chapter I, Machiavelli distinguishes between different kinds of principalities—hereditary or new ones without long traditions. Chapter II discusses the first type, which do not really interest Machiavelli. He is most concerned with the “new” principality, the subject of Chapter III, since most Renaissance rulers of the day in Italy fell into this category. Chapters IV and V discuss some historical examples taken from the period of Alexander the Great and Greek, Roman, or modern Florentine history.]

CHAPTER VI

On New Principalities Acquired by One's Own Arms and Skill

No one should marvel if, in speaking of principalities that are totally new as to their prince and organization, I use the most illustrious examples; since men almost always tread the paths made by others and proceed in their affairs by imitation, although they are not completely able to stay on the path of others nor attain the skill of those they imitate, a prudent man should always enter those paths taken by great men and imitate those who have been most excellent, so that if one's own skill does not match theirs, at least it will have the smell of it; and he should proceed like those prudent archers² who, aware of the strength of their bow when the target they are aiming at seems too distant, set their sights much higher than the designated target, not in order to reach to such a height with their arrow but rather to be able, with the aid of such a high aim, to strike the target.

I say, therefore, that in completely new principalities, where there is a new prince, one finds in maintaining them more or less difficulty according to the greater or lesser skill of the one who acquires them. And because this act of transition from private citizen to prince presupposes either ingenuity or fortune,³ it appears that either the one or the other of these two things should, in part, mitigate many of the problems; nevertheless, he who relies upon fortune less maintains his position best. Things are also facilitated when the prince, having no other dominions to govern, is constrained to come to live there in person. But to come to those who, by means of their own skill and not because of fortune, have become princes, I say that the most admirable are Moses, Cyrus, Romulus, Theseus, and the like.⁴ And although we should not discuss Moses, since he was a mere executor of things ordered by God, nevertheless he must be admired, if for nothing but that grace which made him worthy of talking with God. But let us consider Cyrus and the others who have acquired or founded kingdoms; you will find them all admirable; and if their deeds and their particular institutions are considered, they will not appear different from those of Moses, who had so great a guide. And examining their deeds and their lives, one can see that they received nothing from fortune except the opportunity, which gave them the material they could mold into whatever form they desired; and without that opportunity the strength of their spirit would have been extinguished, and without that strength the opportunity would have come in vain.

It was therefore necessary for Moses to find the people of Israel in Egypt slaves and oppressed by the Egyptians in order that they might be disposed to follow him to escape this servitude. It was necessary for Romulus not to stay in Alba and to be exposed at birth so that he might become King of Rome and founder of that nation. It was necessary for Cyrus to find the Persians discontented with the empire of the Medes, and the Medes soft and effeminate after a lengthy peace. Theseus could not have shown his skill if he had not found the Athenians scattered. These opportunities, therefore, made these men successful, and their outstanding ingenuity made that opportunity known to them, whereby their nations were ennobled and became prosperous.

Like these men, those who become princes through their skill acquire the principality with difficulty, but they hold on to it easily; and the difficulties they encounter in acquiring the principality grow, in part, out of the new institutions and methods they are obliged to introduce in order to found their state and their security. And one should bear in mind that there is nothing more difficult to execute, nor more dubious of success, nor more dangerous to administer than to introduce a new order

of things; for he who introduces it has all those who profit from the old order as his enemies, and he has only lukewarm allies in all those who might profit from the new. This lukewarmness partly stems from fear of their adversaries, who have the law on their side, and partly from the skepticism of men, who do not truly believe in new things unless they have actually had personal experience of them. Therefore, it happens that whenever those who are enemies have the chance to attack, they do so enthusiastically, whereas those others defend hesitantly, so that they, together with the prince, are in danger.

It is necessary, however, if we desire to examine this subject thoroughly, to observe whether these innovators act on their own or are dependent on others: that is, if they are forced to beg or are able to use power in conducting their affairs. In the first case, they always come to a bad end and never accomplish anything; but when they depend on their own resources and can use power, then only seldom do they find themselves in peril. From this comes the fact that all armed prophets were victorious and the unarmed came to ruin. Besides what has been said, people are fickle by nature; and it is simple to convince them of something but difficult to hold them in that conviction; and, therefore, affairs should be managed in such a way that when they no longer believe, they can be made to believe by force. Moses, Cyrus, Theseus, and Romulus could not have made their institutions long respected if they had been unarmed; as in our times happened to Brother Girolamo Savonarola,⁵ who was ruined by his new institutions when the populace began no longer to believe in them, since he had no way of holding steady those who had believed nor of making the disbelievers believe. Therefore, such men have great problems in getting ahead, and they meet all their dangers as they proceed, and they must overcome them with their skill; but once they have overcome them and have begun to be respected, having removed those who were envious of their merits, they remain powerful, secure, honored, and happy.

To such noble examples I should like to add a minor one; but it will have some relation to the others, and I should like it to suffice for all similar cases: and this is Hiero of Syracuse.⁶ From a private citizen, this man became the prince of Syracuse; he did not receive anything from fortune except the opportunity, for since the citizens of Syracuse were oppressed, they elected him as their leader; and from that rank he proved himself worthy of becoming their prince. And he was so skillful while still a private citizen that someone who wrote about him said that "he lacked nothing to reign save a kingdom." He did away with the old militia and established a new one; he put aside old friendships and made

new ones; and since he had allies and soldiers that depended on him, he was able to construct whatever building he wished on such a foundation; so that it cost him great effort to acquire and little to maintain.

CHAPTER VII

On New Principalities Acquired with the Arms of Others and by Fortune

Those private citizens who become princes through fortune alone do so with little effort, but they maintain their position only with a great deal; they meet no obstacles along their way since they fly to success, but all their problems arise when they have arrived. And these are the men who are granted a state either because they have money or because they enjoy the favor of him who grants it: this occurred to many in Greece in the cities of Ionia and the Hellespont, where Darius created princes in order that he might hold these cities for his security and glory; in like manner were set up those emperors who from private citizens came to power by bribing the soldiers. Such men depend solely upon two very uncertain and unstable things: the will and the fortune of him who granted them the state; they do not know how and are not able to maintain their position. They do not know how, since if men are not of great intelligence and ingenuity, it is not reasonable that they know how to rule, having always lived as private citizens; they are not able to, since they do not have forces that are friendly and faithful. Besides, states that rise quickly, just as all the other things of nature that are born and grow rapidly, cannot have roots and ramifications; the first bad weather kills them, unless these men who have suddenly become princes, as I have noted, are of such ability that they know how to prepare themselves quickly and to preserve what fortune has put in their laps, and to construct afterward those foundations that others have built before becoming princes.

Regarding the two methods just listed for becoming a prince, by skill or by fortune, I should like to offer two recent examples: these are Francesco Sforza and Cesare Borgia. Francesco, through the required means and with a great deal of ingenuity, became Duke of Milan from his station as a private citizen, and that which he had acquired with countless hardships he maintained with little trouble. On the other

hand, Cesare Borgia (commonly called Duke Valentino) acquired the state through the favor and help of his father, and when this no longer existed, he lost it,⁷ and this despite the fact that he did everything and used every means that a prudent and skillful man ought to use in order to root himself securely in those states that the arms and fortune of others had granted him. Because as stated above, anyone who does not lay his foundations beforehand could do so later only with great skill, although this would be done with inconvenience to the architect and danger to the building. If, therefore, we consider all the steps taken by the Duke, we shall see that he laid sturdy foundations for his future power; and I do not judge it useless to discuss them, for I would not know of any better precepts to give to a new prince than the example of his deeds; and if he did not succeed in his plans, it was not his fault but was instead the result of an extraordinary and extreme instance of ill fortune.

Alexander VI, in his attempts to advance his son, the Duke, had many problems, both present and future. First, he saw no means of making him master of any state that did not already belong to the church; and if he attempted to seize anything belonging to the church, he knew that the Venetians and the Duke of Milan would not agree to it because Faenza and Rimini were already under the protection of the Venetians. Moreover, he saw that the troops of Italy, and especially those he would have to use, were in the hands of those who had reason to fear the Pope's power; and he could not count on them, since they were all Orsini, Colonna, and their allies.⁸ Therefore, he had to disturb the order of things and cause turmoil among these states in order securely to make himself master of a part of them. This was easy for him to do, for he found that the Venetians, moved by other motives, had decided to bring the French back into Italy; not only did he not oppose this, but he rendered it easier by annulling King Louis' first marriage. The King, therefore, entered Italy with the aid of the Venetians and the consent of Alexander; and no sooner was he in Milan than the Pope procured troops from him for the Romagna campaign; these were granted to him because of the reputation of the King.

Having seized, then, Romagna and having beaten the Colonna, the Duke, wishing to maintain his gain and to advance further, was held back by two things: first, his troops' lack of loyalty; second, the will of France; that is, the troops of the Orsini, which he had been using, might let him down and not only keep him from acquiring more territory but even take away what he had already conquered; and the King, as well, might do the same. He had one experience like this with the Orsini soldiers, when, after the seizure of Faenza, he attacked Bologna and saw

them go reluctantly into battle; as for the King, he learned his purpose when he invaded Tuscany after the capture of the Duchy of Urbino; the King forced him to abandon that campaign. As a consequence, the Duke decided to depend no longer upon the arms and favor of others. And his first step was to weaken the Orsini and Colonna factions in Rome; he won over all their followers who were noblemen, making them his own noblemen and giving them huge subsidies; and he honored them, according to their rank, with military commands and civil appointments; as a result, in a few months their affection for the factions died out in their hearts and all of it was turned toward the Duke. After this, he waited for the opportunity to do away with the Orsini leaders, having already scattered those of the Colonna family; and good opportunity arose and the use he put it to was even better: for when the Orsini later realized that the greatness of the Duke and of the Church meant their ruin, they called together a meeting at Magione, in Perugian territory. From this resulted the rebellion of Urbino and the uprisings in Romagna, and endless dangers for the Duke, all of which he overcame with the aid of the French. And when his reputation had been regained, placing no trust either in France or other outside forces, in order not to have to test them, he turned to deceptive methods. And he knew how to falsify his intentions so well that the Orsini themselves, through Lord Paulo, made peace with him; the Duke did not fail to use all kinds of gracious acts to reassure Paulo, giving him money, clothing, and horses, so that the stupidity of the Orsini brought them to Sinigaglia and into his hands.⁹ Having killed these leaders and having changed their allies into his friends, the Duke had laid very good foundations for his power, having all of Romagna along with the Duchy of Urbino, and, more important, it appeared that he had befriended Romagna and had won the support of all of its populace once the people began to taste the beneficial results of his rule.

And because this matter is notable and worthy of imitation by others, I shall not pass it over. After the Duke had taken Romagna and had found it governed by powerless lords who had been more anxious to plunder their subjects than to govern them and had given them reason for disunity rather than unity, so that the entire province was full of thefts, fights, and of every other kind of insolence, he decided that if he wanted to make it peaceful and obedient to the ruler's law it would be necessary to give it good government. Therefore, he put Messer Remirro de Orco,¹⁰ a cruel and able man, in command there and gave him complete authority. This man, in little time, made the province peaceful and united, and in doing this he made for himself a great reputation.

Afterward, the Duke decided that such great authority was no longer required, for he was afraid that it might become odious; and he set up in the middle of the province a civil court with a very distinguished president, wherein each city had its own counselor. And because he realized that the rigorous measures of the past had generated a certain amount of hatred, he wanted to show, in order to purge men's minds and to win them to his side completely, that if any form of cruelty had arisen, it did not originate from him but from the harsh nature of his minister. And having found the occasion to do this, one morning at Cesena he had Messer Remirro placed on the piazza in two pieces with a block of wood and a bloody sword beside him. The ferocity of such a spectacle left those people satisfied and amazed at the same time.

But let us return to where we digressed. I say that the Duke, finding himself very powerful and partially secured from present dangers, having armed himself the way he wanted to, and having in large measure destroyed those nearby forces that might have harmed him, still had to take into account the King of France if he wished to continue his conquests, for he realized that the King, who had become aware of his error too late, would not support further conquest. And because of this, he began to seek out new allies and to temporize with France during the campaign the French undertook in the Kingdom of Naples against the Spaniards who were besieging Gaeta. His intent was to make himself secure against them; and he would have quickly succeeded in this if Alexander had lived.

And these were his methods concerning present things. But as for future events, he had first to fear that a new successor in control of the Church might not be his friend and might try to take away from him what Alexander had given him. Against this possibility he thought to secure himself in four ways: first, by putting to death all the relatives of those lords that he had dispossessed in order to prevent the Pope from employing that opportunity; second, by gaining the friendship of all the noblemen of Rome, as already mentioned, in order to hold the Pope in check by means of them; third, by making the college of Cardinals as much his own as he could; fourth, by acquiring such a large territory before the Pope died that he would be able to resist an initial attack without need of allies. Of these four things, he had achieved three by the time of Alexander's death; the fourth he had almost achieved, for he killed as many of the dispossessed noblemen as he could seize, and very few saved themselves; and he had won over the Roman noblemen; and he had a great following in the College of Cardinals; and as for the acquisition of new territory, he had planned to become lord of Tuscany and was

already in possession of Perugia and Piombino and had taken Pisa under his protection. And as soon as he no longer needed to respect the wishes of France (for he no longer had to, since the French had already been deprived of the kingdom by the Spaniards, so that it was necessary for both of them to purchase his friendship), he would attack Pisa. After this, Lucca and Siena would have immediately surrendered, partly to spite the Florentines and partly out of fear, and the Florentines would have had no means of preventing it. If he had carried out these designs (and he would have brought them to fruition during the same year that Alexander died), he would have gathered together so many forces and such a reputation that he would have been able to stand alone and would no longer have had to rely upon the favor and forces of others, but rather on his own power and ingenuity. But Alexander died five years after he had drawn his sword. He left his son, gravely ill, with only the state of Romagna secured and with all the others up in the air, between two very powerful enemy armies. And there was in the Duke so much ferocity and so much ability, and so well did he understand how men can be won or lost, and so firm were the foundations that he had laid in such a short time, that if he had not had those armies upon him or if he had been healthy, he would have overcome every difficulty. And that his foundations were good is witnessed by the fact that Romagna waited more than a month for him; in Rome, although only half alive, he was safe; and although the Baglioni, the Vitelli, and the Orsini came to Rome, they found none of their allies opposed to him; if he could not set up a Pope he wanted, at least he could act to ensure that it would not be a man he did not want. But if he had been healthy at the time of Alexander's demise, everything would have been simple. And he himself said to me, on the day when Julius II was made Pope, that he had thought of what might happen on his father's death, and he had found a remedy for everything, except he never dreamed that at the time of his father's death he too would be at death's door.

Now, having summarized all of the Duke's actions, I would not know how to censure him; on the contrary, I believe I am correct in proposing that he be imitated by all those who have risen to power through fortune and with the arms of others. Because he, possessing great courage and high aims, could not have conducted himself in any other manner; and his plans were frustrated solely by the brevity of Alexander's life¹¹ and by his own illness. Anyone, therefore, who determines it necessary in his newly acquired principality to protect himself from his enemies, to win friends, to conquer either by force or by fraud, to make himself loved and feared by the people, to be followed and respected by

his soldiers, to put to death those who can or may do him harm, to replace ancient institutions with new ones, to be severe and gracious, magnanimous and generous, to do away with unfaithful soldiers and to select new ones, to maintain the friendship of kings and of princes in such a way that they must assist you gladly or offend you with caution—that person cannot find more recent examples than this man's deeds. One can only censure him for making Julius Pope; in this he made a bad choice, since, as I said before, not being able to elect a Pope of his own, he could have kept anyone he wished from the papacy; and he should have never agreed to raising to the papacy any cardinal he might have offended or who, upon becoming Pope, might have cause to fear him. For men do harm either out of fear or hatred. Those he had injured were, among others, San Pietro ad Vincula, Colonna, San Giorgio, Ascanio;¹² any of the others, upon becoming Pope, would have to fear him, except for Rouen and the Spaniards; the latter because they were related to him and were in his debt, the former because of his power, since he was joined to the kingdom of France. Therefore, the Duke, above all else, should have made a Spaniard Pope; failing in that, he should have agreed to the election of Rouen¹³ and not to that of San Pietro ad Vincula. And anyone who believes that new benefits make men of high station forget old injuries is deceiving himself. The Duke, then, erred in this election, and it was the cause of his ultimate downfall.

CHAPTER VIII

On Those Who Have Become Princes Through Wickedness

But because there are yet two more ways one can from an ordinary citizen become prince, which cannot completely be attributed to either fortune or skill, I believe they should not be left unmentioned, although one of them will be discussed at greater length in a treatise on republics. These two are: when one becomes prince through some wicked and nefarious means or when a private citizen becomes prince of his native city through the favor of his fellow citizens. And in discussing the first way, I shall cite two examples, one from classical times and the other from recent days, without otherwise entering into the merits of this method, since I consider them sufficient for anyone forced to imitate them.

Agathocles the Sicilian,¹⁴ not only from being an ordinary citizen but from being of low and abject status, became King of Syracuse. This man, a potter's son, lived a wicked life at every stage of his career; yet he joined to his wickedness such strength of mind and of body that, when he entered upon a military career, he rose through the ranks to become commander of Syracuse. Once placed in such a position, having decided to become prince and to hold with violence and without any obligations to others what had been granted to him by universal consent, and having made an agreement with Hamilcar the Carthaginian, who was waging war with his armies in Sicily, he called together one morning the people and the senate of Syracuse as if he were going to discuss things concerning the state; and with a prearranged signal, he had his troops kill all the senators and the richest citizens; and when they were dead, he seized and held the rule of the city without any opposition from the citizenry. And although he was twice defeated by the Carthaginians and eventually besieged, not only was he able to defend his city but, leaving part of his troops for the defense of the siege, with his other men he attacked Africa, and in a short time he freed Syracuse from the siege and forced the Carthaginians into dire straits: they were obliged to make peace with him and to be content with possession of Africa and to leave Sicily to Agathocles.

Anyone, therefore, who examines the deeds and the life of this man will observe nothing or very little that can be attributed to fortune; since, as was said earlier, not with the aid of others but by rising through the ranks, which involved a thousand hardships and dangers, did he come to rule the principality which he then maintained by many brave and dangerous actions. Still, it cannot be called ingenuity¹⁵ to kill one's fellow citizens, to betray friends, to be without faith, without mercy, without religion; by these means one can acquire power but not glory. For if one were to consider Agathocles's ability in getting into and out of dangers, and his greatness of spirit in supporting and in overcoming adversaries, one can see no reason why he should be judged inferior to any most excellent commander; nevertheless, his vicious cruelty and inhumanity, along with numerous wicked deeds, do not permit us to honor him among the most excellent of men. One cannot, therefore, attribute to either fortune or skill what he accomplished without either the one or the other.

In our own days, during the reign of Alexander VI, Oliverotto of Fermo, who many years before had been left as a child without a father, was brought up by his maternal uncle, Giovanni Fogliani. While still very young he was sent to serve as a soldier under Paulo Vitelli so that, once he

was versed in that skill, he might attain some outstanding military position. Then, after Paulo died, he served under his brother, Vitellozzo; and in a very brief time, because of his intelligence and his vigorous body and mind, he became the commander of his troops. But since he felt it was servile to work for others, he decided to seize Fermo with the aid of some citizens of Fermo who preferred servitude to the liberty of their native city, and with the assistance of the followers of Vitellozzo; and he wrote to Giovanni Fogliani that, having been away many years from home, he wished to come to see him and his city and to inspect his own inheritance; and since he had exerted himself for no other reason than to acquire glory, he wanted to arrive in honorable fashion, accompanied by an escort of a hundred horsemen from among his friends and servants so that his fellow citizens might see that he had not spent his time in vain; and he begged his uncle to arrange for an honorable reception from the people of Fermo, one which might bring honor not only to Giovanni but also to himself, being his pupil. Giovanni, therefore, in no way failed in his duty toward his nephew: he had him received in honorable fashion by the people of Fermo, and he gave him rooms in his own house. Oliverotto, after a few days had passed and he had secretly made the preparations necessary for his forthcoming wickedness, gave a magnificent banquet to which he invited Giovanni Fogliani and all of the first citizens of Fermo. And when the meal and all the other entertainment customary at such banquets were completed, Oliverotto, according to plan, began to discuss serious matters, speaking of the greatness of Pope Alexander and his son, Cesare, and of their undertakings. After Giovanni and the others had replied to his comments, he suddenly rose up, announcing that these were matters to be discussed in a more secluded place; and he retired into another room, followed by Giovanni and all the other citizens. No sooner were they seated than from secret places in the room out came soldiers who killed Giovanni and all the others. After this murder, Oliverotto mounted his horse, paraded through the town, and besieged the chief officials in the government palace; so that out of fear they were forced to obey him and to constitute a government of which he made himself prince. And when all those were killed who, because they were discontented, might have harmed him, he strengthened himself by instituting new civil and military institutions; so that, in the space of the year that he held the principality, not only was he secure in the city of Fermo, but he had become feared by all its neighbors. His expulsion would have been as difficult as that of Agathocles if he had not permitted himself to be tricked by Cesare Borgia, when at Sinigaglia, as was noted above, the Duke captured the Orsini and the

Vitelli; there he, too, was captured, a year after he committed the parricide, and together with Vitellozzo, who had been his teacher in ingenuity and wickedness, he was strangled.

One might wonder how Agathocles and others like him, after so many betrayals and cruelties, could live for such a long time secure in their cities and defend themselves from outside enemies without being plotted against by their own citizens; many others, using cruel means, were unable even in peaceful times to hold on to their state, not to speak of the uncertain times of war. I believe that this depends on whether cruelty be well or badly used. Well used are those cruelties (if it is permitted to speak well of evil) that are carried out in a single stroke, done out of necessity to protect oneself, and are not continued but are instead converted into the greatest possible benefits for the subjects. Badly used are those cruelties which, although being few at the outset, grow with the passing of time instead of disappearing. Those who follow the first method can remedy their condition with God and with men as Agathocles did; the others cannot possibly survive.

Wherefore it is to be noted that in taking a state its conqueror should weigh all the harmful things he must do and do them all at once so as not to have to repeat them every day, and in not repeating them to be able to make men feel secure and win them over with the benefits he bestows upon them. Anyone who does otherwise, either out of timidity or because of poor advice, is always obliged to keep his knife in his hand; nor can he ever count upon his subjects, who, because of their fresh and continual injuries, cannot feel secure with him. Injuries, therefore, should be inflicted all at the same time, for the less they are tasted, the less they offend; and benefits should be distributed a bit at a time in order that they may be savored fully. And a prince should, above all, live with his subjects in such a way that no unforeseen event, either good or bad, may make him alter his course; for when emergencies arise in adverse conditions, you are not in time to resort to cruelty, and that good you do will help you little, since it will be judged a forced measure and you will earn from it no thanks whatsoever.

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[Chapter IX treats the "civil" principality, a prince who rules with the support of his fellow citizens. Chapter X discusses how the strength of a principality may be measured: military power is the answer Machiavelli provides. Chapter XI analyzes the special problem of principalities connected with the Church, and concludes that they are in an entirely different category from the others he has discussed. In Chapter XII, Machiavelli attacks the use of mercenary troops, preferring the use of

citizen soldiers in Chapter XIII. In Chapter XIV, he defines the prince's most important activity as planning for and studying warfare, although the prince should read history books to train his mind as well.]

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CHAPTER XV

On Those Things for Which Men, and Particularly Princes, Are Praised or Blamed

Now there remains to be examined what should be the methods and procedures of a prince in dealing with his subjects and friends. And because I know that many have written about this, I am afraid that by writing about it again I shall be thought of as presumptuous, since in discussing this material I depart radically from the procedures of others. But since my intention is to write something useful for anyone who understands it, it seemed more suitable to me to search after the effectual truth of the matter rather than its imagined one.¹⁶ And many writers have imagined for themselves republics and principalities that have never been seen nor known to exist in reality; for there is such a gap between how one lives and how one ought to live that anyone who abandons what is done for what ought to be done learns his ruin rather than his preservation: for a man who wishes to profess goodness at all times will come to ruin among so many who are not good. Hence it is necessary for a prince who wishes to maintain his position to learn how not to be good, and to use this knowledge or not to use it according to necessity.

Leaving aside, therefore, the imagined things concerning a prince, and taking into account those that are true, I say that all men, when they are spoken of, and particularly princes, since they are placed on a higher level, are judged by some of these qualities which bring them either blame or praise. And this is why one is considered generous, another miserly (to use a Tuscan word, since "avaricious" in our language is still used to mean one who wishes to acquire by means of theft; we call "miserly" one who excessively avoids using what he has); one is considered a giver, the other rapacious; one cruel, another merciful; one treacherous, another faithful; one effeminate and cowardly, another bold and courageous; one humane, another haughty; one lascivious, another chaste; one trustworthy, another frivolous; one religious, another unbelieving; and the like. And I know that everyone will admit that it would

be a very praiseworthy thing to find in a prince, of the qualities mentioned above, those that are held to be good; but since it is neither possible to have them nor to observe them all completely, because the human condition does not permit it, a prince must be prudent enough to know how to escape the bad reputation of those vices that would lose the state for him, and must protect himself from those that will not lose it for him, if this is possible; but if he cannot, he need not concern himself unduly if he ignores the less serious vices. And, moreover, he need not worry about incurring the bad reputation of those vices without which it would be difficult to hold his state; since, carefully taking everything into account, he will discover that something which appears to be a virtue, if pursued, will end in his destruction; while some other thing which seems to be a vice, if pursued, will result in his safety and his well-being.

CHAPTER XVI

On Generosity and Miserliness

Beginning, therefore, with the first of the above-mentioned qualities, I say that it would be good to be considered generous; nevertheless, generosity used in such a manner as to give you a reputation for it will harm you; because if it is employed virtuously and as one should employ it, it will not be recognized and you will not avoid the reproach of its opposite. And so, if a prince wants to maintain his reputation for generosity among men, it is necessary for him not to neglect any possible means of lavish display; in so doing such a prince will always use up all his resources and he will be obliged, eventually, if he wishes to maintain his reputation for generosity, to burden the people with excessive taxes and to do everything possible to raise funds. This will begin to make him hateful to his subjects, and, becoming impoverished, he will not be much esteemed by anyone; so that, as a consequence of his generosity, having offended many and rewarded few, he will feel the effects of any slight unrest and will be ruined at the first sign of danger; recognizing this and wishing to alter his policies, he immediately runs the risk of being reproached as a miser.

A prince, therefore, being unable to use this virtue of generosity in a manner which will not harm himself, if he is known for it, should, if he is wise, not worry about being called a miser; for with time he will

come to be considered more generous once it is evident that, as a result of his parsimony, his income is sufficient, he can defend himself from anyone who makes war against him, and he can undertake enterprises without overburdening his people, so that he comes to be generous with all those from whom he takes nothing, who are countless, and miserly with all those to whom he gives nothing, who are few. In our times we have not seen great deeds accomplished except by those who were considered miserly; the others were failures. Pope Julius II, although he made use of his reputation for generosity in order to gain the papacy, then decided not to maintain it in order to be able to wage war; the present King of France has waged many wars without imposing extra taxes on his subjects, only because his habitual parsimony has provided for the additional expenditures; the present King of Spain, if he had been considered generous, would not have engaged in or won so many campaigns.

Therefore, in order not to have to rob his subjects, to be able to defend himself, not to become poor and contemptible, and not to be forced to become rapacious, a prince must consider it of little importance if he incurs the reputation of being a miser, for this is one of those vices that permits him to rule. And if someone were to say: Caesar with his generosity achieved imperial power, and many others, because they were generous and known to be so, achieved very high positions; I would reply: you are either already a prince or you are on the way to becoming one; in the first instance such generosity is damaging; in the second it is very necessary to be thought generous. And Caesar was one of those who wanted to gain the principality of Rome; but if, after obtaining this, he had lived and had not moderated his expenditures, he would have destroyed his rule. And if someone were to reply: there have existed many princes who have accomplished great deeds with their armies who have been reputed to be generous; I would answer you: a prince either spends his own money and that of his subjects or that of others; in the first case he must be economical; in the second he must not restrain any part of his generosity. And for that prince who goes out with his soldiers and lives by looting, sacking, and ransoms, who controls the property of others, such generosity is necessary; otherwise he would not be followed by his troops. And with what does not belong to you or to your subjects you can be a more liberal giver, as were Cyrus, Caesar, and Alexander; for spending the wealth of others does not lessen your reputation but adds to it; only the spending of your own is what harms you. And there is nothing that uses itself up faster than generosity, for as you employ it you lose the means of employing it, and you become either poor and

despised or else, in order to escape poverty, you become rapacious and hated. And above all other things a prince must guard himself against being despised and hated; and generosity leads you to both one and the other. So it is wiser to live with the reputation of a miser, which produces reproach without hatred, than to be forced to incur the reputation of rapacity, which produces reproach along with hatred, because you want to be considered generous.

CHAPTER XVII

On Cruelty and Mercy, and Whether It Is Better to Be Loved Than to Be Feared or the Contrary

Proceeding to the other qualities mentioned above, I say that every prince must desire to be considered merciful and not cruel; nevertheless, he must take care not to misuse this mercy. Cesare Borgia was considered cruel; nonetheless, his cruelty had brought order to Romagna, united it, restored it to peace and obedience. If we examine this carefully, we shall see that he was more merciful than the Florentine people, who, in order to avoid being considered cruel, allowed the destruction of Pistoia.¹⁷ Therefore, a prince must not worry about the reproach of cruelty when it is a matter of keeping his subjects united and loyal; for with a very few examples of cruelty he will be more compassionate than those who, out of excessive mercy, permit disorders to continue, from which arise murders and plundering; for these usually harm the community at large, while the executions that come from the prince harm particular individuals. And the new prince, above all other princes, cannot escape the reputation of being called cruel, since new states are full of dangers. And Virgil, through Dido, states: "My difficult condition and the newness of my rule make me act in such a manner, and to set guards over my land on all sides."¹⁸

Nevertheless, a prince must be cautious in believing and in acting, nor should he be afraid of his own shadow; and he should proceed in such a manner, tempered by prudence and humanity, so that too much trust may not render him imprudent nor too much distrust render him intolerable.

From this arises an argument: whether it is better to be loved than to be feared, or the contrary. I reply that one should like to be both one

and the other; but since it is difficult to join them together, it is much safer to be feared than to be loved when one of the two must be lacking. For one can generally say this about men: that they are ungrateful, fickle, simulators and deceivers, avoiders of danger, greedy for gain; and while you work for their good they are completely yours, offering you their blood, their property, their lives, and their sons, as I said earlier,¹⁹ when danger is far away; but when it comes nearer to you they turn away. And that prince who bases his power entirely on their words, finding himself completely without other preparations, comes to ruin; for friendships that are acquired by a price and not by greatness and nobility of character are purchased but are not owned, and at the proper moment they cannot be spent. And men are less hesitant about harming someone who makes himself loved than one who makes himself feared because love is held together by a chain of obligation which, since men are wretched creatures, is broken on every occasion in which their own interests are concerned; but fear is sustained by a dread of punishment which will never abandon you.

A prince must nevertheless make himself feared in such a manner that he will avoid hatred, even if he does not acquire love; since to be feared and not to be hated can very well be combined; and this will always be so when he keeps his hands off the property and the women of his citizens and his subjects. And if he must take someone's life, he should do so when there is proper justification and manifest cause; but, above all, he should avoid seizing the property of others; for men forget more quickly the death of their father than the loss of their patrimony. Moreover, reasons for seizing their property are never lacking; and he who begins to live by stealing always finds a reason for taking what belongs to others; on the contrary, reasons for taking a life are rarer and disappear sooner.

But when the prince is with his armies and has under his command a multitude of troops, then it is absolutely necessary that he not worry about being considered cruel; for without that reputation he will never keep an army united or prepared for any combat. Among the praiseworthy deeds of Hannibal²⁰ is counted this: that, having a very large army, made up of all kinds of men, which he commanded in foreign lands, there never arose the slightest dissension, neither among themselves nor against their leader, both during his good and his bad fortune. This could not have arisen from anything other than his inhuman cruelty, which along with his many other qualities, made him always respected and terrifying in the eyes of his soldiers; and without that, to attain the same effect, his other qualities would not have sufficed. And the writers of

history, having considered this matter very little, on the one hand admire these deeds of his and on the other condemn the main cause of them.

And that it is true that his other qualities would not have been sufficient can be seen from the example of Scipio, a most extraordinary man not only in his time but in all recorded history, whose armies in Spain rebelled against him; this came about from nothing other than his excessive compassion, which gave to his soldiers more liberty than military discipline allowed. For this he was censured in the senate by Fabius Maximus,²¹ who called him the corruptor of the Roman militia. The Locrians, having been ruined by one of Scipio's officers, were not avenged by him, nor was the arrogance of that officer corrected, all because of his tolerant nature; so that someone in the senate who tried to apologize for him said that there were many men who knew how not to err better than they knew how to correct errors. Such a nature would have, in time, damaged Scipio's fame and glory if he had continued to command armies; but, living under the control of the senate, this harmful characteristic of his not only was concealed but brought him glory.

I conclude, therefore, returning to the problem of being feared and loved, that since men love at their own pleasure and fear at the pleasure of the prince, a wise prince should build his foundation upon that which belongs to him, not upon that which belongs to others: he must strive only to avoid hatred, as has been said.



CHAPTER XVIII

How a Prince Should Keep His Word

How praiseworthy it is for a prince to keep his word and to live by integrity and not by deceit everyone knows; nevertheless, one sees from the experience of our times that the princes who have accomplished great deeds are those who have cared little for keeping their promises and who have known how to manipulate the minds of men by shrewdness; and in the end they have surpassed those who laid their foundations upon loyalty.

You must, therefore, know that there are two means of fighting:²² one according to the laws, the other with force; the first way is proper to

man, the second to beasts; but because the first, in many cases, is not sufficient, it becomes necessary to have recourse to the second. Therefore, a prince must know how to use wisely the natures of the beast and the man. This policy was taught to princes allegorically by the ancient writers, who described how Achilles and many other ancient princes were given to Chiron the Centaur²³ to be raised and taught under his discipline. This can only mean that, having a half-beast and half-man as a teacher, a prince must know how to employ the nature of the one and the other; and the one without the other cannot endure.

Since, then, a prince must know how to make good use of the nature of the beast, he should choose from among the beasts the fox and the lion;²⁴ for the lion cannot defend itself from traps and the fox cannot protect itself from wolves. It is therefore necessary to be a fox in order to recognize the traps and a lion in order to frighten the wolves. Those who play only the part of the lion do not understand matters. A wise ruler, therefore, cannot and should not keep his word when such an observance of faith would be to his disadvantage and when the reasons which made him promise are removed. And if men were all good, this rule would not be good; but since men are a contemptible lot and will not keep their promises to you, you likewise need not keep yours to them. A prince never lacks legitimate reasons to break his promise. Of this one could cite an endless number of modern examples to show how many pacts, how many promises have been made null and void because of the infidelity of princes; and he who has known best how to use the fox has come to a better end. But it is necessary to know how to disguise this nature well and to be a great hypocrite and a liar: and men are so simple-minded and so controlled by their present needs that one who deceives will always find another who will allow himself to be deceived.

I do not wish to remain silent about one of these recent instances. Alexander VI did nothing else, he thought about nothing else, except to deceive men, and he always found the occasion to do this. And there never was a man who had more forcefulness in his oaths, who affirmed a thing with more promises, and who honored his word less; nevertheless, his tricks always succeeded perfectly since he was well acquainted with this aspect of the world.

Therefore, it is not necessary for a prince to have all of the above-mentioned qualities, but it is very necessary for him to appear to have them. Furthermore, I shall be so bold as to assert this: that having them and practicing them at all times is harmful; and appearing to have them is useful; for instance, to seem merciful, faithful, humane, trustworthy, religious, and to be so; but his mind should be disposed in such a

way that should it become necessary not to be so, he will be able and know how to change to the contrary. And it is essential to understand this: that a prince, and especially a new prince, cannot observe all those things for which men are considered good, for in order to maintain the state he is often obliged to act against his promise, against charity, against humanity, and against religion. And therefore, it is necessary that he have a mind ready to turn itself according to the way the winds of fortune and the changeability of affairs require him; and, as I said above, as long as it is possible, he should not stray from the good, but he should know how to enter into evil when necessity commands.

A prince, therefore, must be very careful never to let anything slip from his lips which is not full of the five qualities mentioned above: he should appear, upon seeing and hearing him, to be all mercy, all faithfulness, all integrity, all kindness, all religion. And there is nothing more necessary than to seem to possess this last quality. And men in general judge more by their eyes than their hands; for everyone can see but few can feel. Everyone sees what you seem to be, few touch upon what you are, and those few do not dare to contradict the opinion of the 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 impartial arbiter, one must consider the final result.²⁵ Let a prince therefore act to conquer and to maintain the state; his methods will always be judged honorable and will be praised by all; for ordinary people are always deceived by appearances and by the outcome of a thing; and in the world there is nothing but ordinary people; and there is no room for the few, while the many have a place to lean on. A certain prince of the present day,²⁶ whom I shall refrain from naming, preaches nothing but peace and faith, and to both one and the other he is entirely opposed; and both, if he had put them into practice, would have cost him many times over either his reputation or his state.



CHAPTER XIX

On Avoiding Being Despised and Hated

But now that I have talked about the most important of the qualities mentioned above, I would like to discuss the others briefly in this general manner: that the prince, as was noted above, should concentrate upon

avoiding those things which make him hated and despised; and when he has avoided this, he will have carried out his duties and will find no danger whatsoever in other vices. As I have said, what makes him hated above all else is being rapacious and a usurper of the property and the women of his subjects; he must refrain from this; and in most cases, so long as you do not deprive them of either their property or their honor, the majority of men live happily; and you have only to deal with the ambition of a few, who can be restrained without difficulty and by many means. What makes him despised is being considered changeable, frivolous, effeminate, cowardly, irresolute; from these qualities a prince must guard himself as if from a reef, and he must strive to make everyone recognize in his actions greatness, spirit, dignity, and strength; and concerning the private affairs of his subjects, he must insist that his decision be irrevocable; and he should maintain himself in such a way that no man could imagine that he can deceive or cheat him.

That prince who projects such an opinion of himself is greatly esteemed; and it is difficult to conspire against a man with such a reputation and difficult to attack him, provided that he is understood to be of great merit and revered by his subjects. For a prince should have two fears: one, internal, concerning his subjects; the other, external, concerning foreign powers. From the latter he can defend himself by his good troops and friends; and he will always have good friends if he has good troops; and internal affairs will always be stable when external affairs are stable, provided that they are not already disturbed by a conspiracy; and even if external conditions change, if he is properly organized and lives as I have said and does not lose control of himself, he will always be able to withstand every attack, just as I said that Nabis the Spartan did. But concerning his subjects, when external affairs do not change, he has to fear that they may conspire secretly: the prince secures himself from this by avoiding being hated or despised and by keeping the people satisfied with him; this is a necessary accomplishment, as was treated above at length. And one of the most powerful remedies a prince has against conspiracies is not to be hated by the masses; for a man who plans a conspiracy always believes that he will satisfy the people by killing the prince; but when he thinks he might anger them, he cannot work up the courage to undertake such a deed; for the problems on the side of the conspirators are countless. And experience demonstrates that there have been many conspiracies but few have been concluded successfully; for anyone who conspires cannot be alone, nor can he find companions except from amongst those whom he believes to be dissatisfied; and as soon as you have revealed your intention to one malcontent,

you give him the means to make himself content, since he can have everything he desires by uncovering the plot; so much is this so, that, seeing a sure gain on the one hand and one doubtful and full of danger on the other, if he is to maintain faith with you he has to be either an unusually good friend or a completely determined enemy of the prince. And to treat the matter briefly, I say that on the part of the conspirator there is nothing but fear, jealousy, and the thought of punishment that terrifies him; but on the part of the prince there is the majesty of the principality, the laws, the defenses of friends and the state to protect him; so that, with the good will of the people added to all these things, it is impossible for anyone to be so rash as to plot against him. For, where usually a conspirator has to be afraid before he executes his evil deed, in this case he must be afraid even after the crime is performed, having the people as an enemy, nor can he hope to find any refuge because of this.

One could cite countless examples on this subject; but I shall be satisfied with only the one which occurred during the time of our fathers. Messer Annibale Bentivogli,²⁷ prince of Bologna and grandfather of the present Messer Annibale, was murdered by the Canneschi family, who conspired against him; he left behind no heir except Messer Giovanni, then only a baby. As soon as this murder occurred, the people rose up and killed all the Canneschi. This came about because of the goodwill that the house of the Bentivogli enjoyed in those days; this goodwill was so great that with Annibale dead, and there being no one of that family left in the city who could rule Bologna, the Bolognese people, having heard that in Florence there was one of the Bentivogli blood who was believed until that time to be the son of a blacksmith, went to Florence to find him, and they gave him the control of that city; it was ruled by him until Messer Giovanni became of age to rule.

I conclude, therefore, that a prince should not be too concerned with conspiracies when the people are well disposed toward him; but when the populace is hostile and regards him with hatred, he must fear everything and everyone. And well-organized states and wise princes have, with great diligence, taken care not to anger the nobles and to satisfy the common people and keep them contented; for this is one of the most important concerns that a prince has.

Among the kingdoms in our times that are well organized and well governed is that of France: in it one finds countless good institutions upon which depend the liberty and the security of the king; of these the foremost is the parliament and its authority. For he who organized that kingdom, recognizing the ambition of the nobles and their insolence,

and being aware of the necessity of keeping a bit in their mouths to hold them back, on the one hand, while, on the other, knowing the hatred, based upon fear, of the populace for the nobles, and wanting to reassure them, did not wish this to be the particular obligation of the king. In order to relieve himself of the difficulties he might incur from the nobles if he supported the common people, and from the common people if he supported the nobles, he established a third judicial body that might restrain the nobles and favor the masses without burdening the king. There could be no better nor more prudent an institution than this, nor could there be a better reason for the safety of the king and the kingdom. From this one can extract another notable observation: that princes must delegate distasteful tasks to others; pleasant ones they should keep for themselves. Again I conclude that a prince must respect the nobles but not make himself hated by the common people.

Perhaps it may seem to many who have studied the lives and deaths of some Roman emperors that they afford examples contrary to my point of view; for we find that some of them always lived nobly and demonstrated great strength of character yet nevertheless lost their empire or were killed by their own subjects who plotted against them. Wishing, therefore, to reply to these objections, I shall discuss the traits of several emperors, showing the reasons for their ruin, which are not different from those which I myself have already deduced; and I shall bring forward for consideration those things which are worthy of note for anyone who reads about the history of those times. And I shall let it suffice to choose all those emperors who succeeded to the throne from Marcus the philosopher to Maximinus: these were Marcus, his son Commodus, Pertinax, Julian, Severus, Antoninus Caracalla his son, Macrinus, Heliogabalus, Alexander, and Maximinus.²⁸ And it is first to be noted that while in other principalities one has only to contend with the ambition of the nobles and the arrogance of the people, the Roman emperors had a third problem: they had to endure the cruelty and the avarice of the soldiers. This created such difficulties that it was the cause of the downfall of many of them, since it was hard to satisfy both the soldiers and the populace; for the people loved peace and quiet and because of this loved modest princes, while the soldiers loved the prince who had a military character and who was arrogant, cruel, and rapacious; they wanted him to practice such qualities on the people so that they might double their pay and give vent to their avarice and cruelty. As a result of this situation, those emperors always came to ruin who by nature or by guile did not have so great a reputation that they could keep both the people and the soldiers in check; and most of them, especially

those who came to power as new princes, recognizing the difficulty resulting from these two opposing factions, turned to appeasing the soldiers, caring little about injuring the people. Such a decision was necessary; since princes cannot avoid being hated by somebody, they must first seek not to be hated by the bulk of the populace; and when they cannot achieve this, they must try with every effort to avoid the hatred of the most powerful group. And therefore, those emperors who had need of extraordinary support because of their newness in power allied themselves with the soldiers instead of the people; nevertheless, this proved to their advantage or not, according to whether the prince knew how to maintain his reputation with the soldiers.

For the reasons listed above, it came about that, of Marcus, Pertinax, and Alexander, all of whom lived modest lives, were lovers of justice, enemies of cruelty, humane, and kindly, all except Marcus came to an unhappy end. Marcus alone lived and died with the greatest of honor, for he succeeded to the empire by birthright, and he did not have to recognize any obligation for it either to the soldiers or to the people; then, being endowed with many characteristics which made him revered, he always held, while he was alive, both the one party and the other within their limits, and he was never either hated or despised. But Pertinax was made emperor against the will of the soldiers, who, being used to living licentiously under Commodus, could not tolerate the righteous manner of life to which Pertinax wished to return them; whereupon, having made himself hated, and since to this hatred was added contempt for his old age, he came to ruin at the initial stage of his rule.

And here one must note that hatred is acquired just as much by means of good actions as by bad ones; and so, as I said above, if a prince wishes to maintain the state, he is often obliged not to be good; because whenever that group which you believe you need to support you is corrupted, whether it be the common people, the soldiers, or the nobles, it is to your advantage to follow their inclinations in order to satisfy them; and then good actions are your enemy. But let us come to Alexander. He was of such goodness that among the other laudable deeds attributed to him is this: in the fourteen years that he ruled the empire he never put anyone to death without a trial; nevertheless, since he was considered effeminate and a man who let himself be ruled by his mother, because of this he was despised, and the army plotted against him and murdered him.

Considering now, in contrast, the characteristics of Commodus, Severus, Antoninus Caracalla, and Maximinus, you will find them ex-

tremely cruel and greedy: in order to satisfy their troops, they did not hesitate to inflict all kinds of injuries upon the people; and all except Severus came to a sorry end. For in Severus there was so much ability that, keeping the soldiers as his friends even though the people were oppressed by him, he was always able to rule happily; for those qualities of his made him so esteemed in the eyes of both the soldiers and the common people that the former were awestruck and stupefied and the latter were respectful and satisfied.

And since the actions of this man were great and noteworthy for a new prince, I wish to demonstrate briefly how well he knew how to use the masks of the fox and the lion, whose natures, as I say above, a prince must imitate. As soon as Severus learned of the indecisiveness of the emperor Julian, he convinced the army of which he was in command in Slavonia that it would be a good idea to march to Rome to avenge the death of Pertinax, who had been murdered by the Praetorian Guards. And under this pretext, without showing his desire to rule the empire, he moved his army to Rome, and he was in Italy before his departure was known. When he arrived in Rome, the senate, out of fear, elected him emperor, and Julian was killed. After this beginning, there remained two obstacles for Severus if he wanted to make himself master of the whole state: the first in Asia, where Pescennius Niger, commander of the Asiatic armies, had himself named emperor; and the other in the West, where Albinus was, who also aspired to the empire. And since he judged it dangerous to reveal himself as an enemy to both of them, he decided to attack Niger and to deceive Albinus. He wrote to the latter that, having been elected emperor by the senate, he wanted to share that honor with him; and he sent him the title of Caesar and, by decree of the senate, he made him his coequal: these things were accepted by Albinus as the truth. But after Severus had conquered and executed Niger and had pacified affairs in the East, upon returning to Rome, he complained to the senate that Albinus, ungrateful for the benefits received from him, had treacherously sought to kill him, and for this he was obliged to go and punish his ingratitude. Then he went to find him in France and took both his state and his life.

Anyone, therefore, who will carefully examine the actions of this man will find him a very ferocious lion and a very shrewd fox; and he will see him feared and respected by everyone and not hated by his armies; and one should not be amazed that he, a new man, was able to hold so great an empire; for his outstanding reputation always defended him from that hatred which the common people could have had for him on account of his plundering. But Antoninus, his son, was also a man

who had excellent abilities which made him greatly admired in the eyes of the people and pleasing to the soldiers, for he was a military man, most able to support any kind of hardship, a despiser of all delicate foods and soft living; this made him loved by all the armies; nevertheless, his ferocity and cruelty were so great and so unusual—since he had, after countless individual killings, put to death a large part of the populace of Rome and all that of Alexandria—that he became most despised all over the world. And he aroused the fears even of those whom he had around him, so that he was murdered by a centurion in the midst of his army. From this it is to be noted that such deaths as these, which result from the deliberation of a determined individual, are unavoidable for princes, since anyone who does not fear death can harm them; but the prince must not be too afraid of such men, for they are very rare. He must only guard against inflicting serious injury on anyone who serves him and anyone he has about him in the administration of the principality: Antoninus had done this, for he had shamefully put to death a brother of that centurion, and he threatened the man every day; yet he kept him as a bodyguard. This was a rash decision and, as it happened, one which would bring about his downfall.

But let us come to Commodus, who held the empire with great ease, having inherited it by birth, being the son of Marcus; and it would have been enough for him to follow in the footsteps of his father in order to satisfy the soldiers and the common people. But being a cruel and bestial person by nature, in order to practice his greed upon the common people, he turned to pleasing the armies and to making them undisciplined; on the other hand, by not maintaining his dignity, frequently descending into the arenas to fight with the gladiators and doing other degrading things unworthy of the imperial majesty, he became contemptible in the sight of the soldiers. And being hated on the one hand, and despised on the other, he was plotted against and murdered.

The qualities of Maximinus remain to be described. He was a very warlike man; and because the armies were angered by Alexander's softness, which I explained above, after Alexander's death they elected him to the empire. He did not retain it very long, for two things made him hated and despised: the first was his base origin, having herded sheep once in Thrace (this fact was well known everywhere and it caused him to lose considerable dignity in everyone's eyes); the second was that at the beginning of his reign he deferred going to Rome to take possession of the imperial throne, and he had acquired the reputation of being very cruel, having through his prefects, in Rome and in all other parts of the empire, committed many cruelties. As a result, the entire world was

moved by disgust for his ignoble birth and by the hatred brought about by fear of his cruelty; first Africa revolted, then the senate with the entire populace of Rome, and finally all of Italy conspired against him. To this was added even his own army; for, while besieging Aquileia and finding the capture difficult, angered by his cruelty and fearing him less, seeing that he had many enemies, they murdered him.

I do not wish to discuss Heliogabalus or Macrinus* or Julian, who, since they were universally despised, were immediately disposed of; but I shall come to the conclusion of this discourse. And I say that the princes of our times in their affairs suffer less from this problem of satisfying their soldiers by extraordinary means, for, although they have to consider them to some extent, yet they resolve the question quickly, for none of these princes has standing armies which have evolved along with the government and the administration of the provinces as did the armies of the Roman empire. And therefore, if it was then necessary to satisfy the soldiers more than the common people, it was because the soldiers could do more than the common people; now it is more necessary for all princes, except the Turk and the Sultan,²⁹ to satisfy the common people more than the soldiers, since the people can do more than the soldiers. I make an exception of the Turk, for he always maintains near him twelve thousand infantrymen and fifteen thousand cavalrymen, upon whom depend the safety and the strength of his kingdom, and, setting aside all other concerns, it is necessary for that ruler to maintain them as his friends. Likewise, the kingdom of the Sultan being entirely in the hands of the soldiers, it is fitting that he, too, should maintain them as his friends without respect to the people. And you must note that this state of the Sultan is unlike all the other principalities, since it is similar to the Christian pontificate, which cannot be called either a hereditary principality or a new principality; for it is not the sons of the old prince that are the heirs and that remain as lords, but instead the one who is elected to that rank by those who have the authority to do so. And because this system is an ancient one, it cannot be called a new principality, for in it are none of these difficulties that are to be found in new ones, since, although the prince is new, the institutions of that state are old and are organized to receive him as if he were their hereditary ruler.

But let us return to our subject. Let me say that anyone who considers the discourse written above will see how either hatred or contempt has been the cause of the ruin of these previously mentioned emperors; and he will also recognize how it comes to pass that, although some acted in one way and others in a contrary manner, in each of these groups one man had a happy end and the others an unhappy one.

Because for Pertinax and Alexander, being new princes, it was useless and damaging to wish to imitate Marcus, who was installed in the principality by hereditary right; and likewise for Caracalla, Commodus, and Maximinus, it was disastrous to imitate Severus, since they did not have enough ability to follow in his footsteps. Therefore, a new prince in a new principality cannot imitate the deeds of Marcus, nor yet does he need to follow those of Severus; instead, he should take from Severus those attributes which are necessary to found his state and from Marcus those which are suitable and glorious in order to conserve a state which is already established and stable.

* * *

[In Chapter XX, Machiavelli asserts that the best fortress a prince can possess is the love and affection of his people. Chapter XXI advises the prince to avoid policies of neutrality and to be either a true friend or a true enemy. In Chapter XXII, Machiavelli explains how a prince may be judged by the quality of his advisers. He should, Machiavelli warns in Chapter XXIII, avoid flatterers and not punish advisers who speak the truth to him. In Chapter XXIV, Machiavelli argues that Italian princes have lost their states because of their lack of preparation and ability—not their bad fortune.]

CHAPTER XXV

On Fortune's Role in Human Affairs and How She Can Be Dealt With

It is not unknown to me that many have held, and still hold, the opinion that the things of this world are, in a manner, controlled by fortune and by God, that men with their wisdom cannot control them, and, on the contrary, that men can have no remedy whatsoever for them; and for this reason they might judge that they need not sweat much over such matters but let them be governed by fate. This opinion has been more strongly held in our own times because of the great variation of affairs that has been observed and that is being observed every day which is beyond human conjecture. Sometimes, as I think about these things, I am inclined to their opinion to a certain extent. Nevertheless, in order that our free will be not extinguished, I judge it to be true that fortune is the arbiter of one half of our actions,³⁰ but that she still leaves the control of the other half, or almost that, to us. And I

compare her to one of those ruinous rivers that, when they become enraged, flood the plains, tear down the trees and buildings, taking up earth from one spot and placing it upon another; everyone flees from them, everyone yields to their onslaught, unable to oppose them in any way. But although they are of such a nature, it does not follow that when the weather is calm we cannot take precautions with embankments and dikes, so that when they rise up again either the waters will be channeled off or their impetus will not be either so unchecked or so damaging. The same things happen where fortune is concerned: she shows her force where there is no organized strength to resist her; and she directs her impact there where she knows that dikes and embankments are not constructed to hold her. And if you consider Italy, the seat of these changes and the nation which has set them in motion, you will see a country without embankments and without a single bastion: for if she were defended by the necessary forces, like Germany, Spain, and France, either this flood would not have produced the great changes that it has or it would not have come upon us at all. And this I consider enough to say about fortune in general terms.

But, limiting myself more to particulars, I say that one sees a prince prosper today and come to ruin tomorrow without having seen him change his character or any of the reasons that have been discussed at length earlier; that is, that a prince who relies completely upon fortune will come to ruin as soon as she changes; I also believe that the man who adapts his course of action to the nature of the times will succeed and, likewise, that the man who sets his course of action out of tune with the times will come to grief. For one can observe that men, in the affairs which lead them to the end that they seek—that is, glory and wealth—proceed in different ways; one by caution, another with impetuosity; one through violence, another with guile; one with patience, another with its opposite; and each one by these various means can attain his goals. And we also see, in the case of two cautious men, that one reaches his goal while the other does not; and, likewise, two men equally succeed using two different means, one being cautious and the other impetuous: this arises from nothing else than the nature of the times that either suit or do not suit their course of action. From this results that which I have said, that two men, working in opposite ways, can produce the same outcome; and of two men working in the same fashion one achieves his goal and the other does not. On this also depends the variation of what is good; for, if a man governs himself with caution and patience, and the times and conditions are turning in such a way that his policy is a good one, he will prosper; but if the times and conditions change, he will be

ruined because he does not change his method of procedure. Nor is there to be found a man so prudent that he knows how to adapt himself to this, both because he cannot deviate from that to which he is by nature inclined and also because he cannot be persuaded to depart from a path, having always prospered by following it. And therefore the cautious man, when it is time to act impetuously, does not know how to do so, and he is ruined; but if he had changed his conduct with the times, fortune would not have changed.

Pope Julius II acted impetuously in all his affairs, and he found the times and conditions so apt to this course of action that he always achieved successful results. Consider the first campaign he waged against Bologna while Messer Giovanni Bentivogli was still alive. The Venetians were unhappy about it; so was the King of Spain; Julius still had negotiations going on about it with France; and nevertheless, he started personally on this expedition with his usual ferocity and lack of caution. Such a move kept Spain and the Venetians at bay, the latter out of fear and the former out of a desire to regain the entire Kingdom of Naples; and at the same time it drew the King of France into the affair, for when the King saw that the Pope had already made this move, he judged that he could not deny him the use of his troops without obviously harming him, since he wanted his friendship in order to defeat the Venetians. And therefore Julius achieved with his impetuous action what no other pontiff would ever have achieved with the greatest of human wisdom; for, if he had waited to leave Rome with agreements settled and things in order, as any other pontiff might have done, he would never have succeeded, because the King of France would have found a thousand excuses and the others would have aroused in him a thousand fears. I wish to leave unmentioned his other deeds, which were all similar and which were all successful. And the brevity of his life³¹ did not let him experience the opposite, since if times which necessitated caution had come his ruin would have followed from it: for never would he have deviated from those methods to which his nature inclined him.

I conclude, therefore, that since fortune changes and men remain set in their ways, men will succeed when the two are in harmony and fail when they are not in accord. I am certainly convinced of this: that it is better to be impetuous than cautious, because fortune is a woman,³² and it is necessary, in order to keep her down, to beat her and to struggle with her. And it is seen that she more often allows herself to be taken over by men who are impetuous than by those who make cold advances; and then, being a woman, she is always the friend of young men, for they are less cautious, more aggressive, and they command her with more audacity.

CHAPTER XXVI

An Exhortation to Liberate Italy from the Barbarians

Considering, therefore, all of the things mentioned above, and reflecting as to whether the times are suitable, at present, to honor a new prince in Italy, and if there is the material that might give a skillful and prudent prince the opportunity to introduce a form of government that would bring him honor and good to the people of Italy, it seems to me that so many circumstances are favorable to such a new prince that I know of no other time more appropriate. And if, as I said, it was necessary that the people of Israel be slaves in Egypt in order to recognize Moses' ability, and it was necessary that the Persians be oppressed by the Medes to recognize the greatness of spirit in Cyrus, and it was necessary that the Athenians be dispersed to realize the excellence of Theseus, then, likewise, at the present time, in order to recognize the ability of an Italian spirit, it was necessary that Italy be reduced to her present condition and that she be more enslaved than the Hebrews, more servile than the Persians, more scattered than the Athenians; without a leader, without organization, beaten, despoiled, ripped apart, overrun, and prey to every sort of catastrophe.

And even though before now some glimmer of light may have shown itself in a single individual,³³ so that it was possible to believe that God had ordained him for Italy's redemption, nevertheless it was witnessed afterwards how at the height of his career he was rejected by fortune. So now Italy remains without life and awaits the man who can heal her wounds and put an end to the plundering of Lombardy, the ransoms in the Kingdom of Naples and in Tuscany, and who can cure her of those sores which have been festering for so long. Look how she now prays to God to send someone to redeem her from these barbaric cruelties and insolence; see her still ready and willing to follow a banner, provided that there be someone to raise it up. Nor is there anyone in sight, at present, in whom she can have more hope than in your illustrious house,³⁴ which, with its fortune and ability, favored by God and by the Church, of which it is now prince, could make itself the head of this redemption. This will not be very difficult if you keep before you the deeds and the lives of those named above. And although those men were out of the ordinary and marvelous, they were nevertheless men; and each of them had less opportunity than the present one; for their

enterprises were no more just, nor easier, nor was God more a friend to them than to you. Here justice is great: "Only those wars that are necessary are just, and arms are sacred when there is no hope except through arms."³⁵ Here there is a great willingness; and where there is a great willingness there cannot be great difficulty, if only you will use the institutions of those men I have proposed as your target. Besides this, we now see extraordinary, unprecedented signs brought about by God: the sea has opened up; a cloud has shown you the path; the rock pours forth water; it has rained manna here; everything has converged for your greatness. The rest you must do yourself. God does not wish to do everything, in order not to take from us our free will and that part of the glory which is ours.

And it is no surprise if some of the Italians mentioned previously were not capable of doing what it is hoped may be done by your illustrious house, and if, during the many revolutions in Italy and the many campaigns of war, it always seems that her military ability is spent. This results from the fact that her ancient institutions were not good and that there was no one who knew how to discover new ones; and no other thing brings a new man on the rise such honor as the new laws and the new institutions discovered by him. These things, when they are well founded and have in themselves a certain greatness, make him revered and admirable. And in Italy there is no lack of material to be given a form: here there is great ability in her members, were it not for the lack of it in her leaders. Consider how in duels and skirmishes involving just a few men the Italians are superior in strength, dexterity, and cunning; but when it comes to armies they do not match others. And all this comes from the weakness of her leaders; for those who know are not followed; and with each one seeming to know, there has not been to the present day anyone who has known how to set himself above the others, either because of ingenuity or fortune, so that others might yield to him. As a consequence, during so much time, during the many wars fought over the past twenty years, whenever there has been an army made up completely of Italians it has always made a poor showing. As proof of this, there is first Taro, then Alexandria, Capua, Genoa, Vailà, Bologna, and Mestri.³⁶

Therefore, if your illustrious house desires to follow these excellent men who redeemed their lands, it is necessary before all else, as a true basis for every undertaking, to provide yourself with your own native troops, for one cannot have either more faithful, more loyal, or better troops. And although each one separately may be brave, all of them united will become even braver when they find themselves commanded,

honored, and well treated by their own prince. It is necessary, therefore, to prepare yourself with such troops as these, so that with Italian strength you will be able to defend yourself from foreigners. And although Swiss and Spanish infantry may be reputed terrifying, nevertheless both have defects, so that a third army could not only oppose them but be confident of defeating them. For the Spanish cannot withstand cavalry and the Swiss have a fear of foot soldiers they meet in combat who are as brave as they are. Therefore, it has been witnessed and experience will demonstrate that the Spanish cannot withstand French cavalry and the Swiss are ruined by Spanish infantrymen. And although this last point has not been completely confirmed by experience, there was nevertheless a hint of it at the battle of Ravenna,³⁷ when the Spanish infantry met the German battalions, who follow the same order as the Swiss; and the Spanish, with their agile bodies, aided by their spiked shields, entered between and underneath the Germans' long pikes and were safe, without the Germans having any recourse against them; and had it not been for the cavalry charge that broke them, the Spaniards would have slaughtered them all. Therefore, as the defects of both these kinds of troops are recognized, a new type can be instituted which can stand up to cavalry and will have no fear of foot soldiers: this will come about by creating new armies and changing battle formations. And these are among those matters that, when newly organized, give reputation and greatness to a new prince.

This opportunity, therefore, must not be permitted to pass by so that Italy, after so long a time, may behold its redeemer. Nor can I express with what love he will be received in all those provinces that have suffered through these foreign floods; with what thirst for revenge, with what obstinate loyalty, with what compassion, with what tears! What doors will be closed to him? Which people will deny him obedience? What jealousy could oppose him? What Italian would deny him homage? For everyone, this barbarian dominion stinks! Therefore, may your illustrious house take up this mission with that spirit and with that hope in which just undertakings are begun; so that under your banner this country may be ennobled and, under your guidance, those words of Petrarch may come true:

Ingenuity over rage
Will take up arms; and the battle will be short.
For ancient valor
In Italian hearts is not yet dead.³⁸

NOTES

1. Lorenzo de' Medici, the Magnificent, the Duke of Urbino (1492–1519), should not be confused with his more illustrious grandfather, Lorenzo il Magnifico (1449–92). Lorenzo received Machiavelli's dedication after an earlier preface to *The Prince*, originally intended for Giuliano de' Medici, Duke of Nemours (1479–1516), had to be changed when Giuliano suddenly died. Neither of these Medici princelings ever measured up to Machiavelli's estimation of their potential, and it is ironic that they are remembered today by Michelangelo's magnificent sculptures of them for the Medici Chapel at San Lorenzo in Florence. While the bulk of *The Prince* was completed in 1513, this dedication was probably composed between 1516 and 1519 after Lorenzo was named Duke of Urbino by Pope Leo X (1516) but before his subsequent death (1519).

2. It is interesting that Baldesar Castiglione, author of the *Book of the Courtier* (1528), the only other Italian book to rival Machiavelli's *Prince* in popularity during the European Renaissance, also employs the metaphor of the archer to describe his concept of imitation.

3. Chapter VI contains numerous references to the special Machiavellian quality of *virtù*, translated variously in this edition according to the context of Machiavelli's argument as "skill," "ingenuity," "ability," but rarely "virtue" in the moral sense of the English word. It is impossible to render this complex term by any single English word, for Machiavelli himself did not employ the Italian word in a strictly technical sense with only a single, well-defined meaning.

4. Only Cyrus, founder of the Persian Empire (599–529 B.C.), is a purely political figure, although Machiavelli's knowledge of his life probably came from Xenophon's idealized view in his *Cyropaedia*. According to Biblical narrative, Moses instituted the laws of the Israelites (although they were given to him by God); Romulus was the mythical founder of Rome in 753 B.C., just as Theseus was the legendary King of Athens. It is noteworthy that Machiavelli, supposedly a hard-boiled realist, employs literary or mythical figures as his ideal model for the new prince.

5. A dominican preacher born in Ferrara in 1452, Savonarola became Prior of San Marco in Florence in 1491, and was a major force in Florentine politics after the expulsion of the Medici in 1494. A fierce republican, Savonarola lost favor in the city after Pope Alexander VI excommunicated him, and in 1498 he was executed in the Piazza della Signoria. He was the author of an important

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political work, *Treatise on the Organization and Government of Florence* (1498), which proposed a republican government for the city and an enlarged grand council based on his interpretation of that branch of the Venetian government.

6. Commander of the army of Syracuse, Hiero II (c. 306–215 B.C.) seized power and ruled the city as its tyrant; after an initial alliance with Carthage during the early days of the First Punic War, he made peace with Rome and remained her ally.

7. The sudden death of Cesare Borgia's father, Alexander VI, occurred in August 1503.

8. The Orsini and Colonna families, both powerful Roman clans, were traditional enemies, but neither group could be trusted by Cesare Borgia or Pope Alexander in their quest for power.

9. Borgia's treachery at Sinigaglia (December 31, 1502) led to the strangulation of his adversaries—Oliverotto Euffreducci (ruler of Fermo) and Vitellozzo Vitelli were killed immediately; Paulo Francesco Orsini died a few days later.

10. Named governor of the Romagna in 1501, Cesare Borgia's lieutenant was removed in order to win favor from the fickle populace of the area.

11. Here Machiavelli refers to the comparative brevity of Alexander's pontificate (eleven years), not to his age when he died. In Chapter XI, Machiavelli remarks that the average length of a pontificate was about ten years.

12. These four cardinals are Giuliano della Rovere (later Pope Julius II), called "St. Peter's in Chains" by Machiavelli, who follows the common practice of designating a cardinal by the church to which his office was attached; Giovanni Colonna (d. 1508); Raffaello Riario, Cardinal of San Giorgio (d. 1521); and Ascanio Sforza, son of Francesco Sforza.

13. Georges d'Amboise, Cardinal of Rouen, whom Machiavelli believes Cesare Borgia should have supported for the papacy through pressure upon Spanish and French prelates.

14. Tyrant of Syracuse (361–289 B.C.).

15. Readers of *The Prince* who insist upon interpreting Machiavelli as an immoral or amoral counselor of evil should not overlook this passage, in which Machiavellian *virtù* (skill, ability, ingenuity) is clearly distinguished from naked power. In other words, only a few very specific ends could ever justify such drastic means for Machiavelli.

16. Machiavelli has in mind here not only Plato but also the many abstract portraits of idealized rulers or Christian princes composed by the Latin humanists.

17. When violent squabbles broke out between the Cancellieri and the Panciatichi factions of this Florentine subject-city in 1501–02, Machiavelli was sent there several times in an attempt to restore order.

18. Machiavelli cites the original Latin from Virgil's *Aeneid* (I, 563–64).

19. It was said in Chapter IX.

20. Commander of the Carthaginian army (249–183 B.C.) who was defeated by Scipio at the Battle of Zama in 202 B.C., ending the Second Punic War.

21. Roman consul and dictator in 217 B.C. (d. 203 B.C.), whose delaying

tactics against Hannibal while his army was ravaging Italy were opposed by Scipio, who wished to wage a more aggressive offensive campaign.

22. Machiavelli takes this argument from Cicero, *De officiis* (I, xi), but changes it quite drastically.

23. Machiavelli's strange allegorical interpretation of Chiron's dual nature has no apparent classical source and was probably a product of his own fantasy.

24. Machiavelli found this soon-to-become-famous idea in Cicero's *De officiis* (I, xiii), but he changes Cicero's argument completely. Cicero had maintained that both force and treachery were inhuman and, therefore, contemptible policies.

25. The Italian original, *si guarda al fine*, has often been misconstrued to imply that Machiavelli meant "the end justifies the means," something he never said in *The Prince*. For another important statement concerning ends and means, see Machiavelli's discussion of Romulus in *The Discourses* (I, ix).

26. Probably Ferdinand II of Aragon.

27. Annibale Bentivogli was murdered by rivals in 1445; his son Giovanni took power in Bologna in 1460 and after his death in 1508 Giovanni was succeeded by his son, "the present Messer Annibale" (1469-1540).

28. Machiavelli refers to the succession of Roman rulers between 161 and 238 A.D.: the philosopher-soldier Marcus Aurelius (121-80); his son Commodus (180-93); Pertinax (193); Julian (193); Severus (193-211); his son Caracalla (211-17); Macrinus (217-18); Heliogabalus (218-22); Alexander (222-35); and Maximinus (235-38). Machiavelli's source for his discussion of these men is most likely the Latin translation of Herodian's Greek history done by Angelo Poliziano and first published in 1493.

29. The ruler of Turkey at this time was the Ottoman Selim I; the Sultan is that of Mamluk Egypt, who was selected from among the commanders of the slave army. Selim I overthrew the Mamluks' power in 1517.

30. Machiavelli's conception of the "new prince," his *virtù*, and the important opportunities chance might provide him to achieve power all presuppose a certain amount of human freedom. His discussion of fortune, however, owes more to his poetic inclinations than to a dispassionate philosophical discussion of the weighty issues involved in the conflict between human free will and determinism.

31. Once again, as he had earlier done in discussing Pope Alexander VI (Chapter VII), Machiavelli is referring to the brevity of the pontificate of Julius II, not to the brevity of the man's life itself.

32. Here, Machiavelli clearly draws a parallel between the energy required for a violent sexual encounter and that which determines the drive for political power.

33. This is probably a reference to Cesare Borgia, but Machiavelli may also be referring to Giuliano de' Medici, Duke of Nemours, whose sudden death in 1516 forced Machiavelli to change the dedication of *The Prince*.

34. By 1516, the probable date of the dedication of *The Prince*, Medici family members occupied the papacy (Leo X), and Lorenzo de' Medici, appointed

Duke of Urbino by Leo in that year, was obviously intended to be the future ruler of Florence. When Machiavelli wrote *The Prince* in 1513, he first envisioned a convergence of Medici power in Giuliano de' Medici, Duke of Nemours, and Pope Leo; after Giuliano's death in 1516, this possibility was kept alive with the brief appearance of Lorenzo de' Medici. This opportunity paralleled the opportunity that existed with a Borgia Pope, Alexander VI, and his son Cesare, until the Pope died suddenly in 1503. With the deaths of both Giuliano and Lorenzo by 1519, Medici hopes faded away, and this probably explains why Machiavelli never bothered to publish *The Prince* before his death, since the practical purpose of the little book no longer existed after 1519.

35. Cited by Machiavelli from the original Latin of Livy (IX,i).

36. A list of Italian military defeats in chronological order for rhetorical effect: Charles VIII was victorious over Italian forces at Fornovo (1495) near the Taro River; Louis XII took Alexandria (1499), Capua (1501), Genoa (1507), Valia (1509), and Bologna (1511); the Venetians were defeated near Vicenza in 1513 by foreign troops, resulting in the sack of Mestri (modern Mestre).

37. On April 11, 1512, the French cavalry under Gaston de Foix routed Spanish infantrymen.

38. Lines from Petrarch's *canzone* "Italia mia" (93-96). In citing from Petrarch's patriotic poem, Machiavelli focuses our attention on Petrarch's opposition of *virtù* and *fiore* and asserts that his own *virtù* (ingenuity, a disciplined strength) will eventually triumph over undisciplined anger in the creation of an Italian state by the Medici prince.