First Decade of Titus Livius

By

Niccolo Machiavelli

TO PROFESSOR PASQUALE VILLARI.

DEAR PROFESSOR VILLARI,

Permit me to inscribe your name on a translation of Machiavelli's Discourses which I had your encouragement to undertake, and in which I have done my best to preserve something of the flavour of the original.
Yours faithfully,

NINIAN HILL THOMSON.

FLORENCE, May 17, 1883.

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NICCOLÒ MACHIAVELLI

TO

ZANOBI BUONDELMONTI AND COSIMO RUCELLAI

HEALTH.

I send you a gift, which if it answers ill the obligations I owe you, is at any rate the greatest which Niccolò Machiavelli has it in his power to offer. For in it I have expressed whatever I have learned, or have observed for myself during a long experience and constant study of human affairs. And since neither you nor any other can expect more at my hands, you cannot complain if I have not given you more.

You may indeed lament the poverty of my wit, since what I have to say is but poorly said; and tax the weakness of my judgment, which on many points may have erred in its conclusions. But granting all this, I know not which of us is less beholden to the other: I to you, who have forced me to write what of myself I never should have written; or you to me, who have written what can give you no content.

Take this, however, in the spirit in which all that comes from a friend should be taken, in respect whereof we always look more to the intention of the giver than to the quality of the gift. And, believe me, that in one thing only I find satisfaction, namely, in knowing that while in

many matters I may have made mistakes, at least I have not been mistaken in choosing you before all others as the persons to whom I dedicate these Discourses; both because I seem to myself, in doing so, to have shown a little gratitude for kindness received, and at the same time to have departed from the hackneyed custom which leads many authors to inscribe their works to some Prince, and blinded by hopes of favour or reward, to praise him as possessed of every virtue; whereas with more reason they might reproach him as contaminated with every shameful vice.

To avoid which error I have chosen, not those who are but those who from their infinite merits deserve to be Princes; not such persons as have it in their power to load me with honours, wealth, and preferment, but such as though they lack the power, have all the will to do so. For men, if they would judge justly, should esteem those who are, and not those whose means enable them to be generous; and in like manner those who know how to govern kingdoms, rather than those who possess the government without such knowledge. For Historians award higher praise to Hiero of Syracuse when in a private station than to Perseus the Macedonian when a King affirming that while the former lacked nothing that a Prince should have save the name, the latter had nothing of the King but the kingdom.

Make the most, therefore, of this good or this evil, as you may esteem it, which you have brought upon yourselves; and should you persist in the mistake of thinking my opinions worthy your attention, I shall not fail to proceed with the rest of the History in the manner promised in

my Preface. Farewell.

DISCOURSES

ON THE FIRST DECADE OF

TITUS LIVIUS.

BOOK I.

* * * * *

PREFACE.

Albeit the jealous temper of mankind, ever more disposed to censure than to praise the work of others, has constantly made the pursuit of new methods and systems no less perilous than the search after unknown lands and seas; nevertheless, prompted by that desire which nature has implanted in me, fearlessly to undertake whatsoever I think offers a common benefit to all, I enter on a path which, being hitherto untrodden by any, though it involve me in trouble and fatigue, may yet win me thanks from those who judge my efforts in a friendly spirit. And although my feeble discernment, my slender experience of current affairs, and imperfect knowledge of ancient events, render these efforts of mine defective and of no great utility, they may at least open the way to some other, who, with better parts and sounder reasoning and

judgment, shall carry out my design; whereby, if I gain no credit, at all events I ought to incur no blame.

When I see antiquity held in such reverence, that to omit other instances, the mere fragment of some ancient statue is often bought at a great price, in order that the purchaser may keep it by him to adorn his house, or to have it copied by those who take delight in this art; and how these, again, strive with all their skill to imitate it in their various works; and when, on the other hand, I find those noble labours which history shows to have been wrought on behalf of the monarchies and republics of old times, by kings, captains, citizens, lawgivers, and others who have toiled for the good of their country, rather admired than followed, nay, so absolutely renounced by every one that not a trace of that antique worth is now left among us, I cannot but at once marvel and grieve; at this inconsistency; and all the more because I perceive that, in civil disputes between citizens, and in the bodily disorders into which men fall, recourse is always had to the decisions and remedies, pronounced or prescribed by the ancients.

For the civil law is no more than the opinions delivered by the ancient jurisconsults, which, being reduced to a system, teach the jurisconsults of our own times how to determine; while the healing art is simply the recorded experience of the old physicians, on which our modern physicians found their practice. And yet, in giving laws to a commonwealth, in maintaining States and governing kingdoms, in organizing armies and conducting wars, in dealing with subject nations,

and in extending a State's dominions, we find no prince, no republic, no captain, and no citizen who resorts to the example of the ancients.

This I persuade myself is due, not so much to the feebleness to which the present methods of education have brought the world, or to the injury which a pervading apathy has wrought in many provinces and cities of Christendom, as to the want of a right intelligence of History, which renders men incapable in reading it to extract its true meaning or to relish its flavour. Whence it happens that by far the greater number of those who read History, take pleasure in following the variety of incidents which it presents, without a thought to imitate them; judging such imitation to be not only difficult but impossible; as though the heavens, the sun, the elements, and man himself were no longer the same as they formerly were as regards motion, order, and power.

Desiring to rescue men from this error, I have thought fit to note down with respect to all those books of Titus Livius which have escaped the malignity of Time, whatever seems to me essential to a right understanding of ancient and modern affairs; so that any who shall read these remarks of mine, may reap from them that profit for the sake of which a knowledge of History is to be sought. And although the task be arduous, still, with the help of those at whose instance I assumed the burthen, I hope to carry it forward so far, that another shall have no long way to go to bring it to its destination.

CHAPTER I.--Of the Beginnings of Cities in general, and in particular of that of Rome.

No one who reads how the city of Rome had its beginning, who were its founders, and what its ordinances and laws, will marvel that so much excellence was maintained in it through many ages, or that it grew afterwards to be so great an Empire.

And, first, as touching its origin, I say, that all cities have been founded either by the people of the country in which they stand, or by strangers. Cities have their origins in the former of these two ways when the inhabitants of a country find that they cannot live securely if they live dispersed in many and small societies, each of them unable, whether from its situation or its slender numbers, to stand alone against the attacks of its enemies; on whose approach there is no time left to unite for defence without abandoning many strongholds, and thus becoming an easy prey to the invader. To escape which dangers, whether of their own motion or at the instance of some of greater authority among them, they restrict themselves to dwell together in certain places, which they think will be more convenient to live in and easier to defend.

Among many cities taking their origin in this way were Athens and Venice; the former of which, for reasons like those just now mentioned, was built by a scattered population under the direction of Theseus. To

escape the wars which, on the decay of the Roman Empire daily renewed in Italy by the arrival of fresh hordes of Barbarians, numerous refugees, sheltering in certain little islands in a corner of the Adriatic Sea, gave beginning to Venice; where, without any recognized leader to direct them, they agreed to live together under such laws as they thought best suited to maintain them. And by reason of the prolonged tranquility which their position secured, they being protected by the narrow sea and by the circumstance that the tribes who then harassed Italy had no ships wherewith to molest them, they were able from very small beginnings to attain to that greatness they now enjoy.

In the second case, namely of a city being founded by strangers, the settlers are either wholly independent, or they are controlled by others, as where colonies are sent forth either by a prince or by a republic, to relieve their countries of an excessive population, or to defend newly acquired territories which it is sought to secure at small cost. Of this sort many cities were settled by the Romans, and in all parts of their dominions. It may also happen that such cities are founded by a prince merely to add to his renown, without any intention on his part to dwell there, as Alexandria was built by Alexander the Great. Cities like these, not having had their beginning in freedom, seldom make such progress as to rank among the chief towns of kingdoms.

The city of Florence belongs to that class of towns which has not been independent from the first; for whether we ascribe its origin to the soldiers of Sylla, or, as some have conjectured, to the mountaineers of

Fiesole (who, emboldened by the long peace which prevailed throughout the world during the reign of Octavianus, came down to occupy the plain on the banks of the Arno), in either case, it was founded under the auspices of Rome nor could, at first, make other progress than was permitted by the grace of the sovereign State.

The origin of cities may be said to be independent when a people, either by themselves or under some prince, are constrained by famine, pestilence, or war to leave their native land and seek a new habitation. Settlers of this sort either establish themselves in cities which they find ready to their hand in the countries of which they take possession, as did Moses; or they build new ones, as did Æneas. It is in this last case that the merits of a founder and the good fortune of the city founded are best seen; and this good fortune will be more or less remarkable according to the greater or less capacity of him who gives the city its beginning.

The capacity of a founder is known in two ways: by his choice of a site, or by the laws which he frames. And since men act either of necessity or from choice, and merit may seem greater where choice is more restricted, we have to consider whether it may not be well to choose a sterile district as the site of a new city, in order that the inhabitants, being constrained to industry, and less corrupted by ease, may live in closer union, finding less cause for division in the poverty of their land; as was the case in Ragusa, and in many other cities built in similar situations. Such a choice were certainly the wisest and the most

advantageous, could men be content to enjoy what is their own without seeking to lord it over others. But since to be safe they must be strong, they are compelled avoid these barren districts, and to plant themselves in more fertile regions; where, the fruitfulness of the soil enabling them to increase and multiply, they may defend themselves against any who attack them, and overthrow any who would withstand their power.

And as for that languor which the situation might breed, care must be had that hardships which the site does not enforce, shall be enforced by the laws; and that the example of those wise nations be imitated, who, inhabiting most fruitful and delightful countries, and such as were likely to rear a listless and effeminate race, unfit for all manly exercises, in order to obviate the mischief wrought by the amenity and relaxing influence of the soil and climate, subjected all who were to serve as soldiers to the severest training; whence it came that better soldiers were raised in these countries than in others by nature rugged and barren. Such, of old, was the kingdom of the Egyptians, which, though of all lands the most bountiful, yet, by the severe training which its laws enforced, produced most valiant soldiers, who, had their names not been lost in antiquity, might be thought to deserve more praise than Alexander the Great and many besides, whose memory is still fresh in men's minds. And even in recent times, any one contemplating the kingdom of the Soldan, and the military order of the Mamelukes before they were destroyed by Selim the Grand Turk, must have seen how carefully they trained their soldiers in every kind of warlike exercise;

showing thereby how much they dreaded that indolence to which their genial soil and climate might have disposed them, unless neutralized by strenuous laws. I say, then, that it is a prudent choice to found your city in a fertile region when the effects of that fertility are duly balanced by the restraint of the laws.

When Alexander the Great thought to add to his renown by founding a city, Dinocrates the architect came and showed him how he might build it on Mount Athos, which not only offered a strong position, but could be handled that the city built there might present a semblance of the human form, which would be a thing strange and striking, and worthy of so great a monarch. But on Alexander asking how the inhabitants were to live, Dinocrates answered that he had not thought of that. Whereupon, Alexander laughed, and leaving Mount Athos as it stood, built Alexandria; where, the fruitfulness of the soil, and the vicinity of the Nile and the sea, might attract many to take up their abode.

To him, therefore, who inquires into the origin of Rome, if he assign its beginning to Æneas, it will seem to be of those cities which were founded by strangers if to Romulus, then of those founded by the natives of the country. But in whichever class we place it, it will be seen to have had its beginning in freedom, and not in subjection to another State. It will be seen, too, as hereafter shall be noted, how strict was the discipline which the laws instituted by Romulus, Numa, and its other founders made compulsory upon it; so that neither its fertility, the proximity of the sea, the number of its victories, nor the extent of its

dominion, could for many centuries corrupt it, but, on the contrary, maintained it replete with such virtues as were never matched in any other commonwealth.

And because the things done by Rome, and which Titus Livius has celebrated, were effected at home or abroad by public or by private wisdom, I shall begin by treating, and noting the consequences of those things done at home in accordance with the public voice, which seem most to merit attention; and to this object the whole of this first Book or first Part of my Discourses, shall be directed.

CHAPTER II.--Of the various kinds of Government; and to which of them the Roman Commonwealth belonged.

I forego all discussion concerning those cities which at the outset have been dependent upon others, and shall speak only of those which from their earliest beginnings have stood entirely clear of all foreign control, being governed from the first as pleased themselves, whether as republics or as princedoms.

These as they have had different origins, so likewise have had different laws and institutions. For to some at their very first commencement, or not long after, laws have been given by a single legislator, and all at one time; like those given by Lycurgus to the Spartans; while to others they have been given at different times, as need rose or accident determined; as in the case of Rome. That republic, indeed, may be called happy, whose lot has been to have a founder so prudent as to provide for it laws under which it can continue to live securely, without need to amend them; as we find Sparta preserving hers for eight hundred years, without deterioration and without any dangerous disturbance. On the other hand, some measure of unhappiness attaches to the State which, not having yielded itself once for all into the hands of a single wise legislator, is obliged to recast its institutions for itself; and of such States, by far the most unhappy is that which is furthest removed from a sound system of government, by which I mean that its institutions lie wholly outside the path which might lead it to a true and perfect end. For it is scarcely possible that a State in this position can ever,

by any chance, set itself to rights, whereas another whose institutions are imperfect, if it have made a good beginning and such as admits of its amendment, may in the course of events arrive at perfection. It is certain, however, that such States can never be reformed without great risk; for, as a rule, men will accept no new law altering the institutions of their State, unless the necessity for such a change be demonstrated; and since this necessity cannot arise without danger, the State may easily be overthrown before the new order of things is established. In proof whereof we may instance the republic of Florence, which was reformed in the year 1502, in consequence of the affair of Arezzo, but was ruined in 1512, in consequence of the affair of Prato.

Desiring, therefore, to discuss the nature of the government of Rome, and to ascertain the accidental circumstances which brought it to its perfection, I say, as has been said before by many who have written of Governments, that of these there are three forms, known by the names Monarchy, Aristocracy, and Democracy, and that those who give its institutions to a State have recourse to one or other of these three, according as it suits their purpose. Other, and, as many have thought, wiser teachers, will have it, that there are altogether six forms of government, three of them utterly bad, the other three good in themselves, but so readily corrupted that they too are apt to become hurtful. The good are the three above named; the bad, three others dependent upon these, and each so like that to which it is related, that it is easy to pass imperceptibly from the one to the other. For a Monarchy readily becomes a Tyranny, an Aristocracy an Oligarchy, while a

Democracy tends to degenerate into Anarchy. So that if the founder of a State should establish any one of these three forms of Government, he establishes it for a short time only, since no precaution he may take can prevent it from sliding into its contrary, by reason of the close resemblance which, in this case, the virtue bears to the vice.

These diversities in the form of Government spring up among men by chance. For in the beginning of the world, its inhabitants, being few in number, for a time lived scattered after the fashion of beasts; but afterwards, as they increased and multiplied, gathered themselves into societies, and, the better to protect themselves, began to seek who among them was the strongest and of the highest courage, to whom, making him their head, they tendered obedience. Next arose the knowledge of such things as are honourable and good, as opposed to those which are bad and shameful. For observing that when a man wronged his benefactor, hatred was universally felt for the one and sympathy for the other, and that the ungrateful were blamed, while those who showed gratitude were honoured, and reflecting that the wrongs they saw done to others might be done to themselves, to escape these they resorted to making laws and fixing punishments against any who should transgress them; and in this way grew the recognition of Justice. Whence it came that afterwards, in choosing their rulers, men no longer looked about for the strongest, but for him who was the most prudent and the most just.

But, presently, when sovereignty grew to be hereditary and no longer elective, hereditary sovereigns began to degenerate from their

ancestors, and, quitting worthy courses, took up the notion that princes had nothing to do but to surpass the rest of the world in sumptuous display and wantonness, and whatever else ministers to pleasure so that the prince coming to be hated, and therefore to feel fear, and passing from fear to infliction of injuries, a tyranny soon sprang up.
Forthwith there began movements to overthrow the prince, and plots and conspiracies against him undertaken not by those who were weak, or afraid for themselves, but by such as being conspicuous for their birth, courage, wealth, and station, could not tolerate the shameful life of the tyrant. The multitude, following the lead of these powerful men, took up arms against the prince and, he being got rid of, obeyed these others as their liberators; who, on their part, holding in hatred the name of sole ruler, formed themselves into a government and at first, while the recollection of past tyranny was still fresh, observed the laws they themselves made, and postponing personal advantage to the common welfare, administered affairs both publicly and privately with the utmost diligence and zeal. But this government passing, afterwards, to their descendants who, never having been taught in the school of Adversity, knew nothing of the vicissitudes of Fortune, these not choosing to rest content with mere civil equality, but abandoning themselves to avarice, ambition, and lust, converted, without respect to civil rights what had been a government of the best into a government of the few; and so very soon met with the same fate as the tyrant.

For the multitude loathing its rulers, lent itself to any who ventured, in whatever way, to attack them; when some one man speedily arose who

with the aid of the people overthrew them. But the recollection of the tyrant and of the wrongs suffered at his hands being still fresh in the minds of the people, who therefore felt no desire to restore the monarchy, they had recourse to a popular government, which they established on such a footing that neither king nor nobles had any place in it. And because all governments inspire respect at the first, this government also lasted for a while, but not for long, and seldom after the generation which brought it into existence had died out. For, suddenly, liberty passed into license, wherein neither private worth nor public authority was respected, but, every one living as he liked, a thousand wrongs were done daily. Whereupon, whether driven by necessity, or on the suggestion of some wiser man among them and to escape anarchy, the people reverted to a monarchy, from which, step by step, in the manner and for the causes already assigned, they came round once more to license. For this is the circle revolving within which all States are and have been governed; although in the same State the same forms of Government rarely repeat themselves, because hardly any State can have such vitality as to pass through such a cycle more than once, and still together. For it may be expected that in some sea of disaster, when a State must always be wanting prudent counsels and in strength, it will become subject to some neighbouring and better-governed State; though assuming this not to happen, it might well pass for an indefinite period from one of these forms of government to another.

I say, then, that all these six forms of government are pernicious--the three good kinds, from their brief duration the three bad, from their

inherent badness. Wise legislators therefore, knowing these defects, and avoiding each of these forms in its simplicity, have made choice of a form which shares in the qualities of all the first three, and which they judge to be more stable and lasting than any of these separately. For where we have a monarchy, an aristocracy, and a democracy existing together in the same city, each of the three serves as a check upon the other.

Among those who have earned special praise by devising a constitution of this nature, was Lycurgus, who so framed the laws of Sparta as to assign their proper functions to kings, nobles, and commons; and in this way established a government, which, to his great glory and to the peace and tranquility of his country, lasted for more than eight hundred years. The contrary, however, happened in the case of Solon; who by the turn he gave to the institutions of Athens, created there a purely democratic government, of such brief duration, that I himself lived to witness the beginning of the despotism of Pisistratus. And although, forty years later, the heirs of Pisistratus were driven out, and Athens recovered her freedom, nevertheless because she reverted to the same form government as had been established by Solon, she could maintain it for only a hundred years more; for though to preserve it, many ordinances were passed for repressing the ambition of the great and the turbulence of the people, against which Solon had not provided, still, since neither the monarchic nor the aristocratic element was given a place in her constitution, Athens, as compared with Sparta, had but a short life.

But let us now turn to Rome, which city, although she had no Lycurgus to give her from the first such a constitution as would preserve her long in freedom, through a series of accidents, caused by the contests between the commons and the senate, obtained by chance what the foresight of her founders failed to provide. So that Fortune, if she bestowed not her first favours on Rome, bestowed her second; because, although the original institutions of this city were defective, still they lay not outside the true path which could bring them to perfection. For Romulus and the other kings made many and good laws, and such as were not incompatible with freedom; but because they sought to found a kingdom and not a commonwealth, when the city became free many things were found wanting which in the interest of liberty it was necessary to supply, since these kings had not supplied them. And although the kings of Rome lost their sovereignty, in the manner and for the causes mentioned above, nevertheless those who drove them out, by at once creating two consuls to take their place, preserved in Rome the regal authority while banishing from it the regal throne, so that as both senate and consuls were included in that republic, it in fact possessed two of the elements above enumerated, to wit, the monarchic and the aristocratic.

It then only remained to assign its place to the popular element, and the Roman nobles growing insolent from causes which shall be noticed hereafter, the commons against them, when, not to lose the whole of their power, they were forced to concede a share to the people; while with the share which remained, the senate and consuls retained so much

authority that they still held their own place in the republic. In this way the tribunes of the people came to be created, after whose creation the stability of the State was much augmented, since each the three forms of government had now its due influence allowed it. And such was the good fortune of Rome that although her government passed from the kings to the nobles, and from these to the people, by the steps and for the reasons noticed above, still the entire authority of the kingly element was not sacrificed to strengthen the authority of the nobles, nor were the nobles divested of their authority to bestow it on the commons; but three, blending together, made up a perfect State; which perfection, as shall be fully shown in the next two Chapters, was reached through the dissensions of the commons and the senate.

CHAPTER III.--Of the Accidents which led in Rome to the creation of Tribunes of the People; whereby the Republic was made more perfect.

They who lay the foundations of a State and furnish it with laws must, as is shown by all who have treated of civil government, and by examples of which history is full, assume that 'all men are bad, and will always, when they have free field, give loose to their evil inclinations; and that if these for a while remain hidden, it is owing to some secret cause, which, from our having no contrary experience, we do not recognize at once, but which is afterwards revealed by Time, of whom we speak as the father of all truth.

In Rome, after the expulsion of the Tarquins, it seemed as though the closest union prevailed between the senate and the commons, and that the nobles, laying aside their natural arrogance, had learned so to sympathize with the people as to have become supportable by all, even of the humblest rank. This dissimulation remained undetected, and its causes concealed, while the Tarquins lived; for the nobles dreading the Tarquins, and fearing that the people, if they used them ill, might take part against them, treated them with kindness. But no sooner were the Tarquins got rid of, and the nobles thus relieved of their fears, when they began to spit forth against the commons all the venom which before they had kept in their breasts, offending and insulting them in every way they could; confirming what I have observed already, that men never behave well unless compelled, and that whenever they are free to act as they please, and are under no restraint everything falls at once into

confusion and disorder. Wherefore it has been said that as poverty and hunger are needed to make men industrious, so laws are needed to make them good. When we do well without laws, laws are not needed; but when good customs are absent, laws are at once required.

On the extinction of the Tarquins, therefore, the dread of whom had kept the nobles in check, some new safeguard had to be contrived, which should effect the same result as had been effected by the Tarquins while they lived. Accordingly, after much uproar and confusion, and much danger of violence ensuing between the commons and the nobles, to insure the safety of the former, tribunes were created, and were invested with such station and authority as always afterwards enabled them to stand between the people and the senate, and to resist the insolence of the nobles.

CHAPTER IV.--That the Dissensions between the Senate and Commons of Rome, made Rome free and powerful.

Touching those tumults which prevailed in Rome from the extinction of the Tarquins to the creation of the tribunes the discussion of which I have no wish to avoid, and as to certain other matters of a like nature, I desire to say something in opposition to the opinion of many who assert that Rome was a turbulent city, and had fallen into utter disorder, that had not her good fortune and military prowess made amends for other defects, she would have been inferior to every other republic.

I cannot indeed deny that the good fortune and the armies of Rome were the causes of her empire; yet it certainly seems to me that those holding this opinion fail to perceive, that in a State where there are good soldiers there must be good order, and, generally speaking, good fortune. And looking to the other circumstances of this city, I affirm that those who condemn these dissensions between the nobles and the commons, condemn what was the prime cause of Rome becoming free; and give more heed to the tumult and uproar wherewith these dissensions were attended, than to the good results which followed from them; not reflecting that while in every republic there are two conflicting factions, that of the people and that of the nobles, it is in this conflict that all laws favourable to freedom have their origin, as may readily be seen to have been the case in Rome. For from the time of the Tarquins to that of the Gracchi, a period of over three hundred years, the tumults in Rome seldom gave occasion to punishment by exile, and

very seldom to bloodshed. So that we cannot truly declare those tumults to have been disastrous, or that republic to have been disorderly, which during all that time, on account of her internal broils, banished no more than eight or ten of her citizens, put very few to death, and rarely inflicted money penalties. Nor can we reasonably pronounce that city ill-governed wherein we find so many instances of virtue; for virtuous actions have their origin in right training, right training in wise laws, and wise laws in these very tumults which many would thoughtlessly condemn. For he who looks well to the results of these tumults will find that they did not lead to banishments, nor to violence hurtful to the common good, but to laws and ordinances beneficial to the public liberty. And should any object that the behaviour of the Romans was extravagant and outrageous; that for the assembled people to be heard shouting against the senate, the senate against the people; for the whole commons to be seen rushing wildly through the streets, closing their shops, and quitting the town, were things which might well affright him even who only reads of them; it may be answered, that the inhabitants of all cities, more especially of cities which seek to make use of the people in matters of importance, have their own ways of giving expression to their wishes; among which the city of Rome had the custom, that when its people sought to have a law passed they followed one or another of those courses mentioned above, or else refused to be enrolled as soldiers when, to pacify them, something of their demands had to be conceded. But the demands of a free people are hurtful to freedom, since they originate either in being oppressed, or in the fear that they are about to be so. When this fear is groundless, it finds its

remedy in public meetings, wherein some worthy person may come forward and show the people by argument that they are deceiving themselves. For though they be ignorant, the people are not therefore, as Cicero says, incapable of being taught the truth, but are readily convinced when it is told them by one in whose honesty they can trust.

We should, therefore, be careful how we censure the government of Rome, and should reflect that all the great results effected by that republic, could not have come about without good cause. And if the popular tumults led the creation of the tribunes, they merit all praise; since these magistrates not only gave its due influence to the popular voice in the government, but also acted as the guardians of Roman freedom, as shall be clearly shown in the following Chapter.

CHAPTER V.--Whether the Guardianship of public Freedom is safer in the hands of the Commons or of the Nobles; and whether those who seek to acquire Power or they who seek to maintain it are the greater cause of Commotions.

Of the provisions made by wise founders of republics, one of the most necessary is for the creation of a guardianship of liberty; for according as this is placed in good or bad hands, the freedom of the State will be more or less lasting. And because in every republic we find the two parties of nobles and commons, the question arises, to which of these two this guardianship can most safely be entrusted. Among the Lacedæmonians of old, as now with the Venetians, it was placed in the hands of the nobles, but with the Romans it was vested in the commons. We have, therefore, to determine which of these States made the wiser choice. If we look to reasons, something is to be said on both sides of the question; though were we to look to results, we should have to pronounce in favour of the nobles, inasmuch as the liberty of Sparta and Venice has had a longer life than that of Rome.

As touching reasons, it may be pleaded for the Roman method, that they are most fit to have charge of a thing, who least desire to pervert it to their own ends. And, doubtless, if we examine the aims which the nobles and the commons respectively set before them, we shall find in the former a great desire to dominate, in the latter merely a desire not to be dominated over, and hence a greater attachment to freedom, since they have less to gain than the others by destroying it. Wherefore, when

the commons are put forward as the defenders of liberty, they may be expected to take better care of it, and, as they have no desire to tamper with it themselves, to be less apt to suffer others to do so.

On the other hand, he who defends the method followed by the Spartans and Venetians, may urge, that by confiding this guardianship to the nobles, two desirable ends are served: first, that from being allowed to retain in their own hands a weapon which makes them the stronger party in the State, the ambition of this class is more fully satisfied; and, second, that an authority is withdrawn from the unstable multitude which as used by them is likely to lead to endless disputes and tumults, and to drive the nobles into dangerous and desperate courses. In instance whereof might be cited the case of Rome itself, wherein the tribunes of the people being vested with this authority, not content to have one consul a plebeian, insisted on having both; and afterwards laid claim to the censorship, the prætorship and all the other magistracies in the city. Nor was this enough for them, but, carried away by the same factious spirit, they began after a time to pay court to such men as they thought able to attack the nobility, and so gave occasion to the rise of Marius and the overthrow of Rome.

Wherefore one who weighs both sides of the question well, might hesitate which party he should choose as the guardian of public liberty, being uncertain which class is more mischievous in a commonwealth, that which would acquire what it has not, or that which would keep the authority which it has already. But, on the whole, on a careful balance of

arguments we may sum up thus:--Either we have to deal with a republic eager like Rome to extend its power, or with one content merely to maintain itself; in the former case it is necessary to do in all things as Rome did; in the latter, for the reasons and in the manner to be shown in the following Chapter, we may imitate Venice and Sparta.

But reverting to the question which class of citizens is more mischievous in a republic, those who seek to acquire or those who fear to lose what they have acquired already, I note that when Marcus Menenius and Marcus Fulvius, both of them men of plebeian birth, were made the one dictator, the other master of the knights, that they might inquire into certain plots against Rome contrived in Capua, they had at the same time authority given them by the people to investigate whether, in Rome itself, irregular and corrupt practices had been used to obtain the consulship and other honours of the city. The nobles suspecting that the powers thus conferred were to be turned against them, everywhere gave out that if honours had been sought by any by irregular and unworthy means, it was not by them, but by the plebeians, who, with neither birth nor merit to recommend them, had need to resort to corruption. And more particularly they accused the dictator himself. And so telling was the effect of these charges, that Menenius, after haranguing the people and complaining to them of the calumnies circulated against him, laid down his dictatorship, and submitted himself to whatever judgment might be passed upon him. When his cause came to be tried he was acquitted; but at the hearing it was much debated, whether he who would retain power or he who would acquire it,

is the more dangerous citizen; the desires of both being likely to lead to the greatest disorders.

Nevertheless, I believe that, as a rule, disorders are more commonly occasioned by those seeking to preserve power, because in them the fear of loss breeds the same passions as are felt by those seeking to acquire; since men never think they hold what they have securely, unless when they are gaining something new from others. It is also to be said that their position enables them to operate changes with less effort and greater efficacy. Further, it may be added, that their corrupt and insolent behaviour inflames the minds of those who have nothing, with the desire to have; either for the sake of punishing their adversaries by despoiling them, or to obtain for themselves a share of those riches and honours which they see the others abuse.

CHAPTER VI.--Whether it was possible in Rome to contrive such a Government as would have composed the Differences between the Commons and the Senate.

I have spoken above of the effects produced in Rome by the controversies between the commons and the senate. Now, as these lasted down to the time of the Gracchi, when they brought about the overthrow of freedom, some may think it matter for regret that Rome should not have achieved the great things she did, without being torn by such disputes. Wherefore, it seems to me worth while to consider whether the government of Rome could ever have been constituted in such a way as to prevent like controversies.

In making this inquiry we must first look to those republics which have enjoyed freedom for a great while, undisturbed by any violent contentions or tumults, and see what their government was, and whether it would have been possible to introduce it into Rome. Of such republics we have an example in ancient times in Sparta, in modern times in Venice, of both which States I have already made mention. Sparta created for herself a government consisting of a king and a limited senate. Venice has made no distinction in the titles of her rulers, all qualified to take part in her government being classed under the one designation of "Gentlemen," an arrangement due rather to chance than to the foresight of those who gave this State its constitution. For many persons, from causes already noticed, seeking shelter on these rocks on which Venice now stands, after they had so multiplied that if they were

to continue to live together it became necessary for them to frame laws, established a form of government; and assembling often in their councils to consult for the interests of their city, when it seemed to them that their numbers were sufficient for political existence, they closed the entrance to civil rights against all who came afterwards to live there, not allowing them to take any part in the management of affairs. And when in course of time there came to be many citizens excluded from the government, to add to the importance of the governing body, they named these "Gentlemen" (gentiluomini), the others "Plebeians" (popolani). And this distinction could grow up and maintain itself without causing disturbance; for as at the time of its origin, whosoever then lived in Venice was made one of the governing body, none had reason to complain; while those who came to live there afterwards, finding the government in a completed form, had neither ground nor opportunity to object. No ground, because nothing was taken from them; and no opportunity, because those in authority kept them under control, and never employed them in affairs in which they could acquire importance. Besides which, they who came later to dwell in Venice were not so numerous as to destroy all proportion between the governors and the governed; the number of the "Gentlemen" being as great as, or greater than that of the "Plebeians." For these reasons, therefore, it was possible for Venice to make her constitution what it is, and to maintain it without divisions.

Sparta, again, being governed, as I have said, by a king and a limited senate, was able to maintain herself for the long period she did, because, from the country being thinly inhabited and further influx of

population forbidden, and from the laws of Lycurgus (the observance whereof removed all ground of disturbance) being held in high esteem, the citizens were able to continue long in unity. For Lycurgus having by his laws established in Sparta great equality as to property, but less equality as to rank, there prevailed there an equal poverty; and the commons were less ambitious, because the offices of the State, which were held to their exclusion, were confined to a few; and because the nobles never by harsh treatment aroused in them any desire to usurp these offices. And this was due to the Spartan kings, who, being appointed to that dignity for life, and placed in the midst of this nobility, had no stronger support to their authority than in defending the people against injustice. Whence it resulted that as the people neither feared nor coveted the power which they did not possess, the conflicts which might have arisen between them and the nobles were escaped, together with the causes which would have led to them; and in this way they were able to live long united. But of this unity in Sparta there were two chief causes: one, the fewness of its inhabitants, which allowed of their being governed by a few; the other, that by denying foreigners admission into their country, the people had less occasion to become corrupted, and never so increased in numbers as to prove troublesome to their few rulers.

Weighing all which circumstances, we see that to have kept Rome in the same tranquility wherein these republics were kept, one of two courses must have been followed by her legislators; for either, like the Venetians, they must have refrained from employing the commons in war,

or else, like the Spartans, they must have closed their country to foreigners. Whereas, in both particulars, they did the opposite, arming the commons and increasing their number, and thus affording endless occasions for disorder. And had the Roman commonwealth grown to be more tranquil, this inconvenience would have resulted, that it must at the same time have grown weaker, since the road would have been closed to that greatness to which it came, for in removing the causes of her tumults, Rome must have interfered with the causes of her growth.

And he who looks carefully into the matter will find, that in all human affairs, we cannot rid ourselves of one inconvenience without running into another. So that if you would have your people numerous and warlike, to the end that with their aid you may establish a great empire, you will have them of such a sort as you cannot afterwards control at your pleasure; while should you keep them few and unwarlike, to the end that you may govern them easily, you will be unable, should you extend your dominions, to preserve them, and will become so contemptible as to be the prey of any who attack you. For which reason in all our deliberations we ought to consider where we are likely to encounter least inconvenience, and accept that as the course to be preferred, since we shall never find any line of action entirely free from disadvantage.

Rome might, therefore, following the example of Sparta, have created a king for life and a senate of limited numbers, but desiring to become a great empire, she could not, like Sparta, have restricted the number

of her citizens. So that to have created a king for life and a limited senate had been of little service to her.

Were any one, therefore, about to found a wholly new republic, he would have to consider whether he desired it to increase as Rome did in territory and dominion, or to continue within narrow limits. In the former case he would have to shape its constitution as nearly as possible on the pattern of the Roman, leaving room for dissensions and popular tumults, for without a great and warlike population no republic can ever increase, or increasing maintain itself. In the second case he might give his republic a constitution like that of Venice or Sparta; but since extension is the ruin of such republics, the legislator would have to provide in every possible way against the State which he had founded making any additions to its territories. For these, when superimposed upon a feeble republic, are sure to be fatal to it: as we see to have been the case with Sparta and Venice, the former of which, after subjugating nearly all Greece, on sustaining a trifling reverse, betrayed the insufficiency of her foundations, for when, after the revolt of Thebes under Pelopidas, other cities also rebelled, the Spartan kingdom was utterly overthrown. Venice in like manner, after gaining possession of a great portion of Italy (most of it not by her arms but by her wealth and subtlety), when her strength was put to the proof, lost all in one pitched battle.

I can well believe, then, that to found a republic which shall long endure, the best plan may be to give it internal institutions like those

of Sparta or Venice; placing it in a naturally strong situation, and so fortifying it that none can expect to get the better of it easily, yet, at the same time, not making it so great as to be formidable to its neighbours; since by taking these precautions, it might long enjoy its independence. For there are two causes which lead to wars being made against a republic; one, your desire to be its master, the other the fear lest it should master you; both of which dangers the precaution indicated will go far to remove. For if, as we are to assume, this republic be well prepared for defence, and consequently difficult of attack, it will seldom or never happen that any one will form the design to attack it, and while it keeps within its own boundaries, and is seen from experience not to be influenced by ambition, no one will be led, out of fear for himself, to make war upon it, more particularly when its laws and constitution forbid its extension. And were it possible to maintain things in this equilibrium, I veritably believe that herein would be found the true form of political life, and the true tranquility of a republic. But all human affairs being in movement, and incapable of remaining as they are, they must either rise or fall; and to many conclusions to which we are not led by reason, we are brought by necessity. So that when we have given institutions to a State on the footing that it is to maintain itself without enlargement, should necessity require its enlargement, its foundations will be cut from below it, and its downfall quickly ensue. On the other hand, were a republic so favoured by Heaven as to lie under no necessity of making war, the result of this ease would be to make it effeminate and divided which two evils together, and each by itself, would insure its ruin. And

since it is impossible, as I believe, to bring about an equilibrium, or to adhere strictly to the mean path, we must, in arranging our republic, consider what is the more honourable course for it to take, and so contrive that even if necessity compel its enlargement, it may be able to keep what it gains.

But returning to the point first raised, I believe it necessary for us to follow the method of the Romans and not that of the other republics, for I know of no middle way. We must, consequently, put up with those dissensions which arise between commons and senate, looking on them as evils which cannot be escaped if we would arrive at the greatness of Rome.

In connection with the arguments here used to prove that the authority of the tribunes was essential in Rome to the guardianship of freedom, we may naturally go on to show what advantages result to a republic from the power of impeachment; which, together with others, was conferred upon the tribunes; a subject to be noticed in the following Chapter.

CHAPTER VII.--That to preserve Liberty in a State there must exist the Right to accuse.

To those set forward in a commonwealth as guardians of public freedom, no more useful or necessary authority can be given than the power to accuse, either before the people, or before some council or tribunal, those citizens who in any way have offended against the liberty of their country.

A law of this kind has two effects most beneficial to a State: first, that the citizens from fear of being accused, do not engage in attempts hurtful to the State, or doing so, are put down at once and without respect of persons: and next, that a vent is given for the escape of all those evil humours which, from whatever cause, gather in cities against particular citizens; for unless an outlet be duly provided for these by the laws, they flow into irregular channels and overwhelm the State. There is nothing, therefore, which contributes so much to the stability and permanence of a State, as to take care that the fermentation of these disturbing humours be supplied by operation of law with a recognized outlet. This might be shown by many examples, but by none so clearly as by that of Coriolanus related by Livius, where he tells us, that at a time when the Roman nobles were angry with the plebeians (thinking that the appointment of tribunes for their protection had made them too powerful), it happened that Rome was visited by a grievous famine, to meet which the senate sent to Sicily for corn. But Coriolanus, hating the commons, sought to persuade the

senate that now was the time to punish them, and to deprive them of the authority which they had usurped to the prejudice of the nobles, by withholding the distribution of corn, and so suffering them to perish of hunger. Which advice of his coming to the ears of the people, kindled them to such fury against him, that they would have slain him as he left the Senate House, had not the tribunes cited him to appear and answer before them to a formal charge.

In respect of this incident I repeat what I have just now said, how useful and necessary it is for republics to provide by their laws a channel by which the displeasure of the multitude against a single citizen may find a vent. For when none such is regularly provided, recourse will be had to irregular channels, and these will assuredly lead to much worse results. For when a citizen is borne down by the operation or the ordinary laws, even though he be wronged, little or no disturbance is occasioned to the state: the injury he suffers not being wrought by private violence, nor by foreign force, which are the causes of the overthrow of free institutions, but by public authority and in accordance with public ordinances, which, having definite limits set them, are not likely to pass beyond these so as to endanger the commonwealth. For proof of which I am content to rest on this old example of Coriolanus, since all may see what a disaster it would have been for Rome had he been violently put to death by the people. For, as between citizen and citizen, a wrong would have been done affording ground for fear, fear would have sought defence, defence have led to faction, faction to divisions in the State, and these to its ruin. But

the matter being taken up by those whose office it was to deal with it, all the evils which must have followed had it been left in private hands were escaped.

In Florence, on the other hand, and in our own days, we have seen what violent commotions follow when the people cannot show their displeasure against particular citizens in a form recognized by the laws, in the instance of Francesco Valori, at one time looked upon as the foremost citizen of our republic. But many thinking him ambitious, and likely from his high spirit and daring to overstep the limits of civil freedom, and there being no way to oppose him save by setting up an adverse faction, the result was, that, apprehending irregular attacks, he sought to gain partisans for his support; while his opponents, on their side, having no course open to them of which the laws approved, resorted to courses of which the laws did not approve, and, at last, to open violence. And as his influence had to be attacked by unlawful methods, these were attended by injury not to him only, but to many other noble citizens; whereas, could he have been met by constitutional restraints, his power might have been broken without injury to any save himself. I might also cite from our Florentine history the fall of Piero Soderini, which had no other cause than there not being in our republic any law under which powerful and ambitious citizens can be impeached. For to form a tribunal by which a powerful citizen is to be tried, eight judges only are not enough; the judges must be numerous, because a few will always do the will of a few. But had there been proper methods for obtaining redress, either the people would have impeached Piero if

he was guilty, and thus have given vent to their displeasure without calling in the Spanish army; or if he was innocent, would not have ventured, through fear of being accused themselves, to have taken proceedings against him. So that in either case the bitter spirit which was the cause of all the disorder would have had an end. Wherefore, when we find one of the parties in a State calling in a foreign power, we may safely conclude that it is because the defective laws of that State provide no escape for those malignant humours which are natural to men; which can best be done by arranging for an impeachment before a sufficient number of judges, and by giving countenance to this procedure. This was so well contrived in Rome that in spite of the perpetual struggle maintained between the commons and the senate, neither the senate nor the commons, nor any single citizen, ever sought redress at the hands of a foreign power; for having a remedy at home, there was no need to seek one abroad.

Although the examples above cited be proof sufficient of what I affirm, I desire to adduce one other, recorded by Titus Livius in his history, where he relates that a sister of Aruns having been violated by a Lucumo of Clusium, the chief of the Etruscan towns, Aruns being unable, from the interest of her ravisher, to avenge her, betook himself to the Gauls who ruled in the province we now name Lombardy, and besought them to come with an armed force to Clusium; showing them how with advantage to themselves they might avenge his wrongs. Now, had Aruns seen that he could have had redress through the laws of his country, he never would have resorted to these Barbarians for help.

But as the right to accuse is beneficial in a republic, so calumny, on the other hand, is useless and hurtful, as in the following Chapter I shall proceed to show.

CHAPTER VIII.--That Calumny is as hurtful in a Commonwealth as the power to accuse is useful.

Such were the services rendered to Rome by Furius Camillus in rescuing her from the oppression of the Gauls, that no Roman, however high his degree or station, held it derogatory to yield place to him, save only Manlius Capitolinus, who could not brook such glory and distinction being given to another. For he thought that in saving the Capitol, he had himself done as much as Camillus to preserve Rome, and that in respect of his other warlike achievements he was no whit behind him. So that, bursting with jealousy, and unable to remain at rest by reason of the other's renown, and seeing no way to sow discord among the Fathers, he set himself to spread abroad sinister reports among the commons; throwing out, among other charges, that the treasure collected to be given to the Gauls, but which, afterwards, was withheld, had been embezzled by certain citizens, and if recovered might be turned to public uses in relieving the people from taxes or from private debts. These assertions so prevailed with the commons that they began to hold meetings and to raise what tumults they liked throughout the city. But this displeasing the senate, and the matter appearing to them grave and dangerous, they appointed a dictator to inquire into it, and to restrain the attacks of Manlius. The dictator, forthwith, caused Manlius to be cited before him; and these two were thus brought face to face in the presence of the whole city, the dictator surrounded by the nobles, and Manlius by the commons. The latter, being desired to say with whom the treasure of which he had spoken was to be found, since the senate were

as anxious to know this as the commons, made no direct reply, but answered evasively that it was needless to tell them what they already knew. Whereupon the dictator ordered him to prison.

In this passage we are taught how hateful a thing is calumny in all free States, as, indeed, in every society, and how we must neglect no means which may serve to check it. And there can be no more effectual means for checking calumny than by affording ample facilities for impeachment, which is as useful in a commonwealth as the other is pernicious. And between them there is this difference, that calumny needs neither witness, nor circumstantial proof to establish it, so that any man may be calumniated by any other; but not impeached; since impeachment demands that there be substantive charges made, and trustworthy evidence to support them. Again, it is before the magistrates, the people, or the courts of justice that men are impeached; but in the streets and market places that they are calumniated. Calumny, therefore, is most rife in that State wherein impeachment is least practised, and the laws least favour it. For which reasons the legislator should so shape the laws of his State that it shall be possible therein to impeach any of its citizens without fear or favour; and, after duly providing for this, should visit calumniators with the sharpest punishments. Those punished will have no cause to complain, since it was in their power to have impeached openly where they have secretly calumniated. Where this is not seen to, grave disorders will always ensue. For calumnies sting without disabling; and those who are stung being more moved by hatred of their detractors than by fear of the things they say against them, seek

revenge.

This matter, as we have said, was well arranged for in Rome, but has always been badly regulated in our city of Florence. And as the Roman ordinances with regard to it were productive of much good, so the want of them in Florence has bred much mischief. For any one reading the history of our city may perceive, how many calumnies have at all times been aimed against those of its citizens who have taken a leading part in its affairs. Thus, of one it would be said that he had plundered the public treasury, of another, that he had failed in some enterprise because he had been bribed; of a third, that this or the other disaster had originated in his ambition. Hence hatred sprung up on every side, and hatred growing to division, these led to factions, and these again to ruin. But had there existed in Florence some procedure whereby citizens might have been impeached, and calumniators punished, numberless disorders which have taken there would have been prevented. For citizens who were impeached, whether condemned or acquitted, would have had no power to injure the State; and they would have been impeached far seldomer than they have been calumniated; for calumny, as I have said already, is an easier matter than impeachment.

Some, indeed, have made use of calumny as a means for raising themselves to power, and have found their advantage in traducing eminent citizens who withstood their designs; for by taking the part of the people, and confirming them in their ill-opinion of these great men, they made them their friends. Of this, though I could give many instances, I shall

content myself with one. At the siege of Lucca the Florentine army was commanded by Messer Giovanni Guicciardini, as its commissary, through whose bad generalship or ill-fortune the town was not taken. But whatever the cause of this failure, Messer Giovanni had the blame; and the rumour ran that he had been bribed by the people of Lucca. Which calumny being fostered by his enemies, brought Messer Giovanni to very verge of despair; and though to clear himself he would willingly have given himself up to the Captain of Justice he found he could not, there being no provision in the laws of the republic which allowed of his doing so. Hence arose the bitterest hostility between the friends of Messer Giovanni, who were mostly of the old nobility (grandi), and those who sought to reform the government of Florence; and from this and the like causes, the affair grew to such dimensions as to bring about the downfall of our republic.

Manlius Capitolinus, then, was a calumniator, not an accuser; and in their treatment of him the Romans showed how calumniators should be dealt with; by which I mean, that they should be forced to become accusers; and if their accusation be proved true, should be rewarded, or at least not punished, but if proved false should be punished as Manlius was.

CHAPTER IX.--That to give new Institutions to a Commonwealth, or to reconstruct old Institutions on an entirely new basis, must be the work of one Man.

It may perhaps be thought that I should not have got so far into the history of Rome, without some mention of those who gave that city its institutions, and saying something of these institutions themselves, so far as they relate to religion and war. As I have no wish to keep those who would know my views on these matters in suspense, I say at once, that to many it might seem of evil omen that the founder of a civil government like Romulus, should first have slain his brother, and afterwards have consented to the death of Titus Tatius the Sabine, whom he had chosen to be his colleague in the kingship; since his countrymen, if moved by ambition and lust of power to inflict like injuries on any who opposed their designs, might plead the example of their prince. This view would be a reasonable one were we to disregard the object which led Romulus to put those men to death. But we must take it as a rule to which there are very few if any exceptions, that no commonwealth or kingdom ever has salutary institutions given it from the first or has its institutions recast in an entirely new mould, unless by a single person. On the contrary, it must be from one man that it receives its institutions at first, and upon one man that all similar reconstruction must depend. For this reason the wise founder of a commonwealth who seeks to benefit not himself only, or the line of his descendants, but his State and country, must endeavour to acquire an absolute and undivided authority. And none who is wise will ever blame any action,

however extraordinary and irregular, which serves to lay the foundation of a kingdom or to establish a republic. For although the act condemn the doer, the end may justify him; and when, as in the case of Romulus, the end is good, it will always excuse the means; since it is he who does violence with intent to injure, not he who does it with the design to secure tranquility, who merits blame. Such a person ought however to be so prudent and moderate as to avoid transmitting the absolute authority he acquires, as an inheritance to another; for as men are, by nature, more prone to evil than to good, a successor may turn to ambitious ends the power which his predecessor has used to promote worthy ends. Moreover, though it be one man that must give a State its institutions, once given they are not so likely to last long resting for support on the shoulders of one man only, as when entrusted to the care of many, and when it is the business of many to maintain them. For though the multitude be unfit to set a State in order, since they cannot, by reason of the divisions which prevail among them, agree wherein the true well-being of the State lies, yet when they have once been taught the truth, they never will consent to abandon it. And that Romulus, though he put his brother to death, is yet of those who are to be pardoned, since what he did was done for the common good and not from personal ambition, is shown by his at once creating a senate, with whom he took counsel, and in accordance with whose voice he determined. And whosoever shall well examine the authority which Romulus reserved to himself, will find that he reserved nothing beyond the command of the army when war was resolved on, and the right to assemble the senate. This is seen later, on Rome becoming free by the expulsion of the

Tarquins, when the Romans altered none of their ancient institutions save in appointing two consuls for a year instead of a king for life; for this proves that all the original institutions of that city were more in conformity with a free and constitutional government, than with an absolute and despotic one.

In support of what has been said above, I might cite innumerable instances, as of Moses, Lycurgus, Solon, and other founders of kingdoms and commonwealths, who, from the full powers given them, were enabled to shape their laws to the public advantage; but passing over these examples, as of common notoriety, I take one, not indeed so famous, but which merits the attention of all who desire to frame wise laws. Agis, King of Sparta, desiring to bring back his countrymen to those limits within which the laws of Lycurgus had held them, because he thought that, from having somewhat deviated from them, his city had lost much of its ancient virtue and, consequently much of its strength and power, was, at the very outset of his attempts, slain by the Spartan Ephori, as one who sought to make himself a tyrant. But Cleomenes coming after him in the kingdom, and, on reading the notes and writings which he found of Agis wherein his designs and intentions were explained, being stirred by the same desire, perceived that he could not confer this benefit on his country unless he obtained sole power. For he saw that the ambition of others made it impossible for him to do what was useful for many against the will of a few. Wherefore, finding fit occasion, he caused the Ephori and all others likely to throw obstacles in his way, to be put to death; after which, he completely renewed the laws of Lycurgus. And the result

of his measures would have been to give fresh life to Sparta, and to gain for himself a renown not inferior to that of Lycurgus, had it not been for the power of the Macedonians and the weakness of the other Greek States. For while engaged with these reforms, he was attacked by the Macedonians, and being by himself no match for them, and having none to whom he could turn for help, he was overpowered; and his plans, though wise and praiseworthy, were never brought to perfection.

All which circumstances considered, I conclude that he who gives new institutions to a State must stand alone; and that for the deaths of Remus and Tatius, Romulus is to be excused rather than blamed.

CHAPTER X.--That in proportion as the Founder of a Kingdom or Commonwealth merits Praise, he who founds a Tyranny deserves Blame.

Of all who are praised they are praised the most, who are the authors and founders of religions. After whom come the founders of kingdoms and commonwealths. Next to these, they have the greatest name who as commanders of armies have added to their own dominions or those of their country. After these, again, are ranked men of letters, who being of various shades of merit are celebrated each in his degree. To all others, whose number is infinite, is ascribed that measure of praise to which his profession or occupation entitles him. And, conversely, all who contribute to the overthrow of religion, or to the ruin of kingdoms and commonwealths, all who are foes to letters and to the arts which confer honour and benefit on the human race (among whom I reckon the impious, the cruel, the ignorant, the indolent, the base and the worthless), are held in infamy and detestation.

No one, whether he be wise or foolish, bad or good, if asked to choose between these two kinds of men, will ever be found to withhold praise from what deserves praise, or blame from what is to be blamed. And yet almost all, deceived by a false good and a false glory, allow themselves either ignorantly or wilfully to follow in the footsteps such as deserve blame rather than praise; and, have it in their power to establish, to their lasting renown, a commonwealth or kingdom, turn aside to create a tyranny without a thought how much they thereby lose in name, fame, security, tranquility, and peace of mind; and in name how much infamy,

scorn, danger, and disquiet they are? But were they to read history, and turn to profit the lessons of the past, it seems impossible that those living in a republic as private citizens, should not prefer their native city, to play the part of Scipio rather of Cæsar; or that those who by good fortune or merit have risen to be rulers, should not seek rather to resemble Agesilaus, Timoleon, and Dion, than to Nabis, Phalaris and Dionysius; since they would see how the latter are loaded with infamy, while the former have been extolled beyond bounds. They would see, too, how Timoleon and others like him, had as great authority in their country as Dionysius or Phalaris in theirs, while enjoying far greater security. Nor let any one finding Cæsar celebrated by a crowd of writers, be misled by his glory; for those who praise him have been corrupted by good fortune, and overawed by the greatness of that empire which, being governed in his name, would not suffer any to speak their minds openly concerning him. But let him who desires to know how historians would have written of Cæsar had they been free to declare their thoughts mark what they say of Catiline, than whom Cæsar is more hateful, in proportion as he who does is more to be condemned than he who only desires to do evil. Let him see also what praises they lavish upon Brutus, because being unable, out of respect for his power, to reproach Cæsar, they magnify his enemy. And if he who has become prince in any State will but reflect, how, after Rome was made an empire, far greater praise was earned those emperors who lived within the laws, and worthily, than by those who lived in the contrary way, he will see that Titus, Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus and Marcus had no need of prætorian cohorts, or of countless legions to guard them, but were

defended by their own good lives, the good-will of their subjects, and the attachment of the senate. In like manner he will perceive in the case of Caligula, Nero, Vitellius, and ever so many more of those evil emperors, that all the armies of the east and of the west were of no avail to protect them from the enemies whom their bad and depraved lives raised up against them. And were the history of these emperors rightly studied, it would be a sufficient lesson to any prince how to distinguish the paths which lead to honour and safety from those which end in shame and insecurity. For of the twenty-six emperors from Cæsar to Maximinus, sixteen came to a violent, ten only to a natural death; and though one or two of those who died by violence may have been good princes, as Galba or Pertinax, they met their fate in consequence of that corruption which their predecessors had left behind in the army. And if among those who died a natural death, there be found some bad emperors, like Severus, it is to be ascribed to their signal good fortune and to their great abilities, advantages seldom found united in the same man. From the study this history we may also learn how a good government is to be established; for while all the emperors who succeeded to the throne by birth, except Titus, were bad, all were good who succeeded by adoption; as in the case of the five from Nerva to Marcus. But so soon as the empire fell once more to the heirs by birth, its ruin recommenced.

Let a prince therefore look to that period which extends from Nerva to Marcus, and contrast it with that which went before and that which came after, and then let him say in which of them he would wish to have

been born or to have reigned. For during these times in which good men governed, he will see the prince secure in the midst of happy subjects, and the whole world filled with peace and justice. He will find the senate maintaining its authority, the magistrates enjoying their honours, rich citizens their wealth, rank and merit held in respect, ease and content everywhere prevailing, rancour, licence corruption and ambition everywhere quenched, and that golden age restored in which every one might hold and support what opinions he pleased. He will see, in short, the world triumphing, the sovereign honoured and revered, the people animated with love, and rejoicing in their security. But should he turn to examine the times of the other emperors, he will find them wasted by battles, torn by seditions, cruel alike in war and peace; many princes perishing by the sword; many wars foreign and domestic; Italy overwhelmed with unheard-of disasters; her towns destroyed and plundered; Rome burned; the Capitol razed to the ground by Roman citizens; the ancient temples desolated; the ceremonies of religion corrupted; the cities rank with adultery; the seas covered with exiles and the islands polluted with blood. He will see outrage follow outrage; rank, riches, honours, and, above all, virtue imputed as mortal crimes; informers rewarded; slaves bribed to betray their masters, freedmen their patrons, and those who were without enemies brought to destruction by their friends; and then he will know the true nature of the debt which Rome, Italy, and the world owe to Cæsar; and if he possess a spark of human feeling, will turn from the example of those evil times, and kindle with a consuming passion to imitate those which were good.

And in truth the prince who seeks for worldly glory should desire to be the ruler of a corrupt city; not that, like Cæsar, he may destroy it, but that, like Romulus, he may restore it; since man cannot hope for, nor Heaven offer any better opportunity of fame. Were it indeed necessary in giving a constitution to a State to forfeit its sovereignty, the prince who, to retain his station, should withhold a constitution, might plead excuse; but for him who in giving a constitution can still retain his sovereignty, no excuse is to be made.

Let those therefore to whom Heaven has afforded this opportunity, remember that two courses lie open to them; one which will render them secure while they live and glorious when they die; another which exposes them to continual difficulties in life, and condemns them to eternal infamy after death.

CHAPTER XI.--Of the Religion of the Romans.

Though Rome had Romulus for her first founder, and as a daughter owed him her being and nurture, nevertheless, when the institutions of Romulus were seen by Heaven to be insufficient for so great a State, the Roman senate were moved to choose Numa Pompilius as his successor, that he might look to all matters which Romulus had neglected. He finding the people fierce and turbulent, and desiring with the help of the peaceful arts to bring them to order and obedience, called in the aid of religion as essential to the maintenance of civil society, and gave it such a form, that for many ages God was nowhere so much feared as in that republic. The effect of this was to render easy any enterprise in which the senate or great men of Rome thought fit to engage. And whosoever pays heed to an infinity of actions performed, sometimes by the Roman people collectively, often by single citizens, will see, that esteeming the power of God beyond that of man, they dreaded far more to violate their oath than to transgress the laws; as is clearly shown by the examples of Scipio and of Manlius Torquatus. For after the defeat of the Romans by Hannibal at Cannæ, many citizens meeting together, resolved, in their terror and dismay, to abandon Italy and seek refuge in Sicily. But Scipio, getting word of this, went among them, and menacing them with his naked sword, made them swear never to abandon their country. Again, when Lucius Manlius was accused by the tribune Marcus Pomponius, before the day fixed for trial, Titus Manlius, afterwards named Torquatus, son to Lucius, went to seek this Marcus, and threatening him with death if he did not withdraw the charge against his father,

compelled him to swear compliance; and he, through fear, having sworn, kept his oath. In the first of these two instances, therefore, citizens whom love of their country and its laws could not have retained in Italy, were kept there by the oath forced upon them; and in the second, the tribune Marcus, to keep his oath, laid aside the hatred he bore the father, and overlooked the injury done him by the son, and his own dishonour. And this from no other cause than the religion which Numa had impressed upon this city.

And it will be plain to any one who carefully studies Roman History, how much religion helped in disciplining the army, in uniting the people, in keeping good men good, and putting bad men to shame; so that had it to be decided to which prince, Romulus or Numa, Rome owed the greater debt, I think the balance must turn in favour of Numa; for when religion is once established you may readily bring in arms; but where you have arms without religion it is not easy afterwards to bring in religion. We see, too, that while Romulus in order to create a senate, and to establish his other ordinances civil and military, needed no support from Divine authority, this was very necessary to Numa, who feigned to have intercourse with a Nymph by whose advice he was guided in counselling the people. And this, because desiring to introduce in Rome new and untried institutions, he feared that his own authority might not effect his end. Nor, indeed, has any attempt ever been made to introduce unusual laws among a people, without resorting to Divine authority, since without such sanction they never would have been accepted. For the wise recognize many things to be good which do not bear such reasons on

the face of them as command their acceptance by others; wherefore, wise men who would obviate these difficulties, have recourse to Divine aid. Thus did Lycurgus, thus Solon, and thus have done many besides who have had the same end in view.

The Romans, accordingly, admiring the prudence and virtues of Numa, assented to all the measures which he recommended. This, however, is to be said, that the circumstance of these times being deeply tinctured with religious feeling, and of the men with whom he had to deal being rude and ignorant, gave Numa better facility to carry out his plans, as enabling him to mould his subjects readily to any new impression. And, doubtless, he who should seek at the present day to form a new commonwealth, would find the task easier among a race of simple mountaineers, than among the dwellers in cities where society is corrupt; as the sculptor can more easily carve a fair statue from a rough block, than from the block which has been badly shaped out by another. But taking all this into account, I maintain that the religion introduced by Numa was one of the chief causes of the prosperity of Rome, since it gave rise to good ordinances, which in turn brought with them good fortune, and with good fortune, happy issues to whatsoever was undertaken.

And as the observance of the ordinances of religion is the cause of the greatness of a State, so their neglect is the occasion of its decline; since a kingdom without the fear of God must either fall to pieces, or must be maintained by the fear of some prince who supplies that

influence not supplied by religion. But since the lives of princes are short, the life of this prince, also, and with it his influence, must soon come to an end; whence it happens that a kingdom which rests wholly on the qualities of its prince, lasts for a brief time only; because these qualities, terminating with his life, are rarely renewed in his successor. For as Dante wisely says:--

"Seldom through the boughs
doth human worth renew itself; for such
the will of Him who gives it, that to Him
we may ascribe it."[1]

It follows, therefore, that the safety of a commonwealth or kingdom lies, not in its having a ruler who governs it prudently while he lives, but in having one who so orders things, that when he dies, the State may still maintain itself. And though it be easier to impose new institutions or a new faith on rude and simple men, it is not therefore impossible to persuade their adoption by men who are civilized, and who do not think themselves rude. The people of Florence do not esteem themselves rude or ignorant, and yet were persuaded by the Friar Girolamo Savonarola that he spoke with God. Whether in this he said truth or no, I take not on me to pronounce, since of so great a man we must speak with reverence; but this I do say, that very many believed him without having witnessed anything extraordinary to warrant their belief; his life, his doctrines, the matter whereof he treated, being sufficient to enlist their faith.

Let no man, therefore, lose heart from thinking that he cannot do what others have done before him; for, as I said in my Preface, men are born, and live, and die, always in accordance with the same rules.

[Footnote 1:

L'umana probitate: e questo vuole
Quei che la dà, perchè da lui si chiami.
Purg. vii. 121-123.]

CHAPTER XII.--That it is of much moment to make account of Religion; and that Italy, through the Roman Church, being wanting therein, has been ruined.

Princes and commonwealths that would save themselves from growing corrupted, should before all things keep uncorrupted the rites and ceremonies of religion, and always hold them in reverence; since we can have no surer sign of the decay of a province than to see Divine worship held therein in contempt. This is easily understood when it is seen on what foundation that religion rests in which a man is born. For every religion has its root in certain fundamental ordinances peculiar to itself.

The religion of the Gentiles had its beginning in the responses of the oracles and in the prognostics of the augurs and soothsayers. All their other ceremonies and observances depended upon these; because men naturally believed that the God who could forecast their future weal or woe, could also bring them to pass. Wherefore the temples, the prayers, the sacrifices, and all the other rites of their worship, had their origin in this, that the oracles of Delos, of Dodona, and others celebrated in antiquity, held the world admiring and devout. But, afterwards, when these oracles began to shape their answers to suit the interests of powerful men, and their impostures to be seen through by the multitude, men grew incredulous and ready to overturn every sacred institution. For which reason, the rulers of kingdoms and commonwealths should maintain the foundations of the faith which they hold; since

thus it will be easy for them to keep their country religious, and, consequently, virtuous and united. To which end they should countenance and further whatsoever tells in favour of religion, even should they think it untrue; and the wiser they are, and the better they are acquainted with natural causes, the more ought they to do so. It is from this course having been followed by the wise, that the miracles celebrated even in false religions, have come to be held in repute; for from whatever source they spring, discreet men will extol them, whose authority afterwards gives them currency everywhere.

These miracles were common enough in Rome, and among others this was believed, that when the Roman soldiers were sacking the city of Veii, certain of them entered the temple of Juno and spoke to the statue of the goddess, saying, "Wilt thou come with us to Rome?" when to some it seemed that she inclined her head in assent, and to others that they heard her answer, "Yea." For these men being filled with religious awe (which Titus Livius shows us by the circumstance that, in entering the temple, they entered devoutly, reverently, and without tumult), persuaded themselves they heard that answer to their question, which, perhaps, they had formed beforehand in their minds. But their faith and belief were wholly approved of and confirmed by Camillus and by the other chief men of the city.

Had religion been maintained among the princes of Christendom on the footing on which it was established by its Founder, the Christian States and republics had been far more united and far more prosperous than they

now are; nor can we have surer proof of its decay than in witnessing how those countries which are the nearest neighbours of the Roman Church, the head of our faith, have less devoutness than any others; so that any one who considers its earliest beginnings and observes how widely different is its present practice, might well believe its ruin or its chastisement to be close at hand.

But since some are of opinion that the welfare of Italy depends upon the Church of Rome, I desire to put forward certain arguments which occur to me against that view, and shall adduce two very strong ones, which, to my mind, admit of no answer. The first is, that, through the ill example of the Roman Court, the country has lost all religious feeling and devoutness, a loss which draws after it infinite mischiefs and disorders; for as the presence of religion implies every excellence, so the contrary is involved in its absence. To the Church, therefore, and to the priests, we Italians owe this first debt, that through them we have become wicked and irreligious. And a still greater debt we owe them for what is the immediate cause of our ruin, namely, that by the Church our country is kept divided. For no country was ever united or prosperous which did not yield obedience to some one prince or commonwealth, as has been the case with France and Spain. And the Church is the sole cause why Italy stands on a different footing, and is subject to no one king or commonwealth. For though she holds here her seat, and exerts her temporal authority, she has never yet gained strength and courage to seize upon the entire country, or make herself supreme; yet never has been so weak that when in fear of losing her

temporal dominion, she could not call in some foreign potentate to aid

her against any Italian State by which she was overmatched. Of which we find many instances, both in early times, as when by the intervention of Charles the Great she drove the Lombards, who had made themselves masters of nearly the whole country, out of Italy; and also in recent times, as when, with the help of France, she first stripped the Venetians of their territories, and then, with the help of the Swiss, expelled the French.

The Church, therefore, never being powerful enough herself to take possession of the entire country, while, at the same time, preventing any one else from doing so, has made it impossible to bring Italy under one head; and has been the cause of her always living subject to many princes or rulers, by whom she has been brought to such division and weakness as to have become a prey, not to Barbarian kings only, but to any who have thought fit to attack her. For this, I say, we Italians have none to thank but the Church. And were any man powerful enough to transplant the Court of Rome, with all the authority it now wields over the rest of Italy, into the territories of the Swiss (the only people who at this day, both as regards religion and military discipline, live like the ancients,) he would have clear proof of the truth of what I affirm, and would find that the corrupt manners of that Court had, in a little while, wrought greater mischief in these territories than any other disaster which could ever befall them.

CHAPTER XIII.--Of the use the Romans made of Religion in giving Institutions to their City, in carrying out their Enterprises, and in quelling Tumults.

Here it seems to me not out of place to cite instances of the Romans seeking assistance from religion in reforming their institutions and in carrying out their warlike designs. And although many such are related by Titus Livius, I content myself with mentioning the following only: The Romans having appointed tribunes with consular powers, all of them, save one, plebeians, it so chanced that in that very year they were visited by plague and famine, accompanied by many strange portents. Taking occasion from this, the nobles, at the next creation of tribunes, gave out that the gods were angry with Rome for lowering the majesty of her government, nor could be appeased but by the choice of tribunes being restored to a fair footing. Whereupon the people, smitten with religious awe, chose all the tribunes from the nobles. Again, at the siege of Veii, we find the Roman commanders making use of religion to keep the minds of their men well disposed towards that enterprise. For when, in the last year of the siege, the soldiers, disgusted with their protracted service, began to clamour to be led back to Rome, on the Alban lake suddenly rising to an uncommon height, it was found that the oracles at Delphi and elsewhere had foretold that Veii should fall that year in which the Alban lake overflowed. The hope of near victory thus excited in the minds of the soldiers, led them to put up with the weariness of the war, and to continue in arms; until, on Camillus being named dictator, Veii was taken after a ten years' siege. In these cases,

therefore, we see religion, wisely used, assist in the reduction of this city, and in restoring the tribuneship to the nobles; neither of which ends could well have been effected without it.

One other example bearing on the same subject I must not omit. Constant disturbances were occasioned in Rome by the tribune Terentillus, who, for reasons to be noticed in their place, sought to pass a certain law. The nobles, in their efforts to baffle him, had recourse to religion, which they sought to turn to account in two ways. For first they caused the Sibylline books to be searched, and a feigned answer returned, that in that year the city ran great risk of losing its freedom through civil discord; which fraud, although exposed by the tribunes, nevertheless aroused such alarm in the minds of the commons that they slackened in their support of their leaders. Their other contrivance was as follows: A certain Appius Herdonius, at the head of a band of slaves and outlaws, to the lumber of four thousand, having seized the Capitol by night, an alarm was spread that were the Equians and Volscians, those perpetual enemies of the Roman name, then to attack the city, they might succeed in taking it. And when, in spite of this, the tribunes stubbornly persisted in their efforts to pass the law, declaring the act of Herdonius to be a device of the nobles and no real danger. Publius Rubetius, a citizen of weight and authority, came forth from the Senate House, and in words partly friendly and partly menacing, showed them the peril in which the city stood, and that their demands were unseasonable; and spoke to such effect that the commons bound themselves by oath to stand by the consul; in fulfilment of which engagement they aided the

consul, Publius Valerius, to carry the Capitol by assault. But Valerius being slain in the attack, Titus Quintius was at once appointed in his place, who, to leave the people no breathing time, nor suffer their thoughts to revert to the Terentillian law, ordered them to quit Rome and march against the Volscians; declaring them bound to follow him by virtue of the oath they had sworn not to desert the consul. And though the tribunes withstood him, contending that the oath had been sworn to the dead consul and not to Quintius, yet the people under the influence of religious awe, chose rather to obey the consul than believe the tribunes. And Titus Livius commends their behaviour when he says: "That neglect of the gods which now prevails, had not then made its way nor was it then the practice for every man to interpret his oath, or the laws, to suit his private ends." The tribunes accordingly, fearing to lose their entire ascendency, consented to obey the consul, and to refrain for a year from moving in the matter of the Terentillian law; while the consuls, on their part, undertook that for a year the commons should not be called forth to war. And thus, with the help of religion, the senate were able to overcome a difficulty which they never could have overcome without it.

CHAPTER XIV.--That the Romans interpreted the Auspices to meet the occasion; and made a prudent show of observing the Rites of Religion even when forced to disregard them; and any who rashly slighted Religion they punished.

Auguries were not only, as we have shown above, a main foundation of the old religion of the Gentiles, but were also the cause of the prosperity of the Roman commonwealth. Accordingly, the Romans gave more heed to these than to any other of their observances; resorting to them in their consular comitia; in undertaking new enterprises; in calling out their armies; in going into battle; and, in short, in every business of importance, whether civil or military. Nor would they ever set forth on any warlike expedition, until they had satisfied their soldiers that the gods had promised them victory.

Among other means of declaring the auguries, they had in their armies a class of soothsayers, named by them pullarii, whom, when they desired to give battle, they would ask to take the auspices, which they did by observing the behaviour of fowls. If the fowls pecked, the engagement was begun with a favourable omen. If they refused, battle was declined. Nevertheless, when it was plain on the face of it that a certain course had to be taken, they take it at all hazards, even though the auspices were adverse; contriving, however, to manage matters so adroitly as not to appear to throw any slight on religion; as was done by the consul Papirius in the great battle he fought with the Samnites wherein that nation was finally broken and overthrown. For Papirius being encamped

over against the Samnites, and perceiving that he fought, victory was certain, and consequently being eager to engage, desired the omens to be taken. The fowls refused to peck; but the chief soothsayer observing the eagerness of the soldiers to fight and the confidence felt both by them and by their captain, not to deprive the army of such an opportunity of glory, reported to the consul that the auspices were favourable. Whereupon Papirius began to array his army for battle. But some among the soothsayers having divulged to certain of the soldiers that the fowls had not pecked, this was told to Spurius Papirius, the nephew of the consul, who reporting it to his uncle, the latter straightway bade him mind his own business, for that so far as he himself and the army were concerned, the auspices were fair; and if the soothsayer had lied, the consequences were on his head. And that the event might accord with the prognostics, he commanded his officers to place the soothsayers in front of the battle. It so chanced that as they advanced against the enemy, the chief soothsayer was killed by a spear thrown by a Roman soldier; which, the consul hearing of, said, "All goes well, and as the Gods would have it, for by the death of this liar the army is purged of blame and absolved from whatever displeasure these may have conceived against it." And contriving, in this way to make his designs tally with the auspices, he joined battle, without the army knowing that the ordinances of religion had in any degree been disregarded.

But an opposite course was taken by Appius Pulcher, in Sicily, in the first Carthaginian war. For desiring to join battle, he bade the soothsayers take the auspices, and on their announcing that the fowls

refused to feed, he answered, "Let us see, then, whether they will drink," and, so saying, caused them to be thrown into the sea. After which he fought and was defeated. For this he was condemned at Rome, while Papirius was honoured; not so much because the one had gained while the other had lost a battle, as because in their treatment of the auspices the one had behaved discreetly, the other with rashness. And, in truth, the sole object of this system of taking the auspices was to insure the army joining battle with that confidence of success which constantly leads to victory; a device followed not by the Romans only, but by foreign nations as well; of which I shall give an example in the following Chapter.

CHAPTER XV.--How the Samnites, as a last resource in their broken Fortunes, had recourse to Religion.

The Samnites, who before had met with many defeats at the hands of the Romans, were at last decisively routed by them in Etruria, where their armies were cut to pieces and their commanders slain. And because their allies also, such as the Etruscans, the Umbrians, and the Gauls, were likewise vanquished, they "could now no longer" as Livius tells us, "either trust to their own strength or to foreign aid; yet, for all that, would not cease from hostilities, nor resign themselves to forfeit the liberty which they had unsuccessfully defended, preferring new defeats to an inglorious submission." They resolved, therefore, to make a final effort; and as they knew that victory was only to be secured by inspiring their soldiers with a stubborn courage, to which end nothing could help so much as religion, at the instance of their high priest, Ovius Paccius, they revived an ancient sacrificial rite performed by them in the manner following. After offering solemn sacrifice they caused all the captains of their armies, standing between the slain victims and the smoking altars, to swear never to abandon the war. They then summoned the common soldiers, one by one, and before the same altars, and surrounded by a ring of many centurions with drawn swords, first bound them by oath never to reveal what they might see or hear; and then, after imprecating the Divine wrath, and reciting the most terrible incantations, made them vow and swear to the gods, as they would not have a curse light on their race and offspring, to follow wherever their captains led, never to turn back from battle, and to put

any they saw turn back to death. Some who in their terror declined to swear, were forthwith slain by the centurions. The rest, warned by their cruel fate, complied. Assembling thereafter to the number of forty thousand, one-half of whom, to render their appearance of unusual splendour were clad in white, with plumes and crests over their helmets, they took up their ground in the neighbourhood of Aquilonia. But Papirius, being sent against them, bade his soldiers be of good cheer, telling them "that feathers made no wounds, and that a Roman spear would pierce a painted shield;" and to lessen the effect which the oath taken by the Samnites had upon the minds of the Romans, he said that such an oath must rather distract than strengthen those bound by it, since they had to fear, at once, their enemies, their comrades, and their Gods. In the battle which ensued, the Samnites were routed, any firmness lent them by religion or by the oath they had sworn, being balanced by the Roman valour, and the terror inspired by past defeats. Still we see that, in their own judgment, they had no other refuge to which to turn, nor other remedy for restoring their broken hopes; and this is strong testimony to the spirit which religion rightly used can arouse.

Some of the incidents which I have now been considering may be thought to relate rather to the foreign than to the domestic affairs of Rome, which last alone form the proper subject of this Book; nevertheless since the matter connects itself with one of the most important institutions of the Roman republic, I have thought it convenient to notice it here, so as not to divide the subject and be obliged to return

to it hereafter.

CHAPTER XVI.--That a People accustomed to live under a Prince, if by any accident it become free, can hardly preserve that Freedom.

Should a people accustomed to live under a prince by any accident become free, as did the Romans on the expulsion of the Tarquins, we know from numberless instances recorded in ancient history, how hard it will be for it to maintain that freedom. And this is no more than we might expect. For a people in such circumstances may be likened to the wild animal which, though destined by nature to roam at large in the woods, has been reared in the cage and in constant confinement and which, should it chance to be set free in the open country, being unused to find its own food, and unfamiliar with the coverts where it might lie concealed, falls a prey to the first who seeks to recapture it. Even thus it fares with the people which has been accustomed to be governed by others; since ignorant how to act by itself either for attack or defence, and neither knowing foreign princes nor being known of them, it is speedily brought back under the yoke, and often under a heavier yoke than that from which it has just freed its neck. These difficulties will be met with, even where the great body of the citizens has not become wholly corrupted; but where the corruption is complete, freedom, as shall presently be shown, is not merely fleeting but impossible. Wherefore my remarks are to be taken as applying to those States only wherein corruption has as yet made no great progress, and in which there is more that is sound than unsound.

To the difficulties above noticed, another has to be added, which is,

that a State in becoming free makes for itself bitter enemies but not warm friends. All become its bitter enemies who, drawing their support from the wealth of the tyrant, flourished under his government. For these men, when the causes which made them powerful are withdrawn, can no longer live contented, but are one and all impelled to attempt the restoration of the tyranny in hopes of regaining their former importance. On the other hand, as I have said, the State which becomes free does not gain for itself warm friends. For a free government bestows its honours and rewards in accordance with certain fixed rules, and on considerations of merit, without which none is honoured or rewarded. But when a man obtains only those honours or rewards which he seems to himself to deserve, he will never admit that he is under any obligation to those who bestow them. Moreover the common benefits that all derive from a free government, which consist in the power to enjoy what is our own, openly and undisturbed, in having to feel no anxiety for the honour of wife or child, nor any fear for personal safety, are hardly recognized by men while they still possess them, since none will ever confess obligation to him who merely refrains from injury. For these reasons, I repeat, a State which has recently become free, is likely to have bitter enemies and no warm friends.

Now, to meet these difficulties and their attendant disorders, there is no more potent, effectual, wholesome, and necessary remedy than to slay the sons of Brutus. They, as the historian tells us, were along with other young Romans led to conspire against their country, simply because the unusual privileges which they had enjoyed under the kings, were

withheld under the consuls; so that to them it seemed as though the freedom of the people implied their servitude. Any one, therefore, who undertakes to control a people, either as their prince or as the head of a commonwealth, and does not make sure work with all who are hostile to his new institutions, founds a government which cannot last long. Undoubtedly those princes are to be reckoned unhappy, who, to secure their position, are forced to advance by unusual and irregular paths, and with the people for their enemies. For while he who has to deal with a few adversaries only, can easily and without much or serious difficulty secure himself, he who has an entire people against him can never feel safe and the greater the severity he uses the weaker his authority becomes; so that his best course is to strive to make the people his friends.

But since these views may seem to conflict with what I have said above, treating there of a republic and here of a prince, that I may not have to return to the subject again, I will in this place discuss it briefly. Speaking, then of those princes who have become the tyrants of their country, I say that the prince who seeks to gain over an unfriendly people should first of all examine what it is the people really desire, and he will always find that they desire two things: first, to be revenged upon those who are the cause of their servitude; and second, to regain their freedom. The first of these desires the prince can gratify wholly, the second in part. As regards the former, we have an instance exactly in point. Clearchus, tyrant of Heraclea, being in exile, it so happened that on a feud arising between the commons and the nobles

of that city, the latter, perceiving they were weaker than their adversaries, began to look with favour on Clearchus, and conspiring with him, in opposition to the popular voice recalled him to Heraclea and deprived the people of their freedom. Clearchus finding himself thus placed between the arrogance of the nobles, whom he could in no way either satisfy or correct, and the fury of the people, who could not put up with the loss of their freedom, resolved to rid himself at a stroke from the harassment of the nobles and recommend himself to the people. Wherefore, watching his opportunity, he caused all the nobles to be put to death, and thus, to the extreme delight of the people, satisfied one of those desires by which they are possessed, namely, the desire for vengeance.

As for the other desire of the people, namely, to recover their freedom, the prince, since he never can content them in this, should examine what the causes are which make them long to be free; and he will find a very few of them desiring freedom that they may obtain power, but all the rest, whose number is countless, only desiring it that they may live securely. For in all republics, whatever the form of their government, barely forty or fifty citizens have any place in the direction of affairs; who, from their number being so small, can easily be reckoned with, either by making away with them, or by allowing them such a share of honours as, looking to their position, may reasonably content them. All those others whose sole aim it is to live safely, are well contented where the prince enacts such laws and ordinances as provide for the general security, while they establish his own authority; and when he

does this, and the people see that nothing induces him to violate these laws, they soon begin to live happily and without anxiety. Of this we have an example in the kingdom of France, which enjoys perfect security from this cause alone, that its kings are bound to compliance with an infinity of laws upon which the well-being of the whole people depends. And he who gave this State its constitution allowed its kings to do as they pleased as regards arms and money; but provided that as regards everything else they should not interfere save as the laws might direct. Those rulers, therefore, who omit to provide sufficiently for the safety of their government at the outset, must, like the Romans, do so on the first occasion which offers; and whoever lets the occasion slip, will repent too late of not having acted as he should. The Romans, however, being still uncorrupted at the time when they recovered their freedom, were able, after slaying the sons of Brutus and getting rid of the Tarquins, to maintain it with all those safeguards and remedies which we have elsewhere considered. But had they already become corrupted, no remedy could have been found, either in Rome or out of it, by which their freedom could have been secured; as I shall show in the following Chapter.

CHAPTER XVII.--That a corrupt People obtaining Freedom can hardly preserve it.

I believe that if her kings had not been expelled, Rome must very soon have become a weak and inconsiderable State. For seeing to what a pitch of corruption these kings had come, we may conjecture that if two or three more like reigns had followed, and the taint spread from the head to the members, so soon as the latter became infected, cure would have been hopeless. But from the head being removed while the trunk was still sound, it was not difficult for the Romans to return to a free and constitutional government.

It may be assumed, however, as most certain, that a corrupted city living under a prince can never recover its freedom, even were the prince and all his line to be exterminated. For in such a city it must necessarily happen that one prince will be replaced by another, and that things will never settle down until a new lord be established; unless, indeed, the combined goodness and valour of some one citizen should maintain freedom, which, even then, will endure only for his lifetime; as happened twice in Syracuse, first under the rule of Dion, and again under that of Timoleon, whose virtues while they lived kept their city free, but on whose death it fell once more under a tyranny.

But the strongest example that can be given is that of Rome, which on the expulsion of the Tarquins was able at once to seize on liberty and to maintain it; yet, on the deaths of Cæsar, Caligula, and Nero, and on

the extinction of the Julian line, was not only unable to establish her freedom, but did not even venture a step in that direction. Results so opposite arising in one and the same city can only be accounted for by this, that in the time of the Tarquins the Roman people were not yet corrupted, but in these later times had become utterly corrupt. For on the first occasion, nothing more was needed to prepare and determine them to shake off their kings, than that they should be bound by oath to suffer no king ever again to reign in Rome; whereas, afterwards, the authority and austere virtue of Brutus, backed by all the legions of the East, could not rouse them to maintain their hold of that freedom, which he, following in the footsteps of the first Brutus, had won for them; and this because of the corruption wherewith the people had been infected by the Marian faction, whereof Cæsar becoming head, was able so to blind the multitude that it saw not the yoke under which it was about to lay its neck.

Though this example of Rome be more complete than any other, I desire to instance likewise, to the same effect, certain peoples well known in our own days; and I maintain that no change, however grave or violent, could ever restore freedom to Naples or Milan, because in these States the entire body of the people has grown corrupted. And so we find that Milan, although desirous to return to a free form of government, on the death of Filippo Visconti, had neither the force nor the skill needed to preserve it.

Most fortunate, therefore, was it for Rome that her kings grew corrupt

soon, so as to be driven out before the taint of their corruption had reached the vitals of the city. For it was because these were sound that the endless commotions which took place in Rome, so far from being hurtful, were, from their object being good, beneficial to the commonwealth. From which we may draw this inference, that where the body of the people is still sound, tumults and other like disorders do little hurt, but that where it has become corrupted, laws, however well devised, are of no advantage, unless imposed by some one whose paramount authority causes them to be observed until the community be once more restored to a sound and healthy condition.

Whether this has ever happened I know not, nor whether it ever can happen. For we see, as I have said a little way back, that a city which owing to its pervading corruption has once begun to decline, if it is to recover at all, must be saved not by the excellence of the people collectively, but of some one man then living among them, on whose death it at once relapses into its former plight; as happened with Thebes, in which the virtue of Epaminondas made it possible while he lived to preserve the form of a free Government, but which fell again on his death into its old disorders; the reason being that hardly any ruler lives so long as to have time to accustom to right methods a city which has long been accustomed to wrong. Wherefore, unless things be put on a sound footing by some one ruler who lives to a very advanced age, or by two virtuous rulers succeeding one another, the city upon their death at once falls back into ruin; or, if it be preserved, must be so by incurring great risks, and at the cost of much blood. For the corruption

I speak of, is wholly incompatible with a free government, because it results from an inequality which pervades the State and can only be removed by employing unusual and very violent remedies, such as few are willing or know how to employ, as in another place I shall more fully explain.

CHAPTER XVIII.--How a Free Government existing in a corrupt City may be preserved, or not existing may be created.

I think it neither out of place, nor inconsistent with what has been said above, to consider whether a free government existing in a corrupt city can be maintained, or, not existing, can be introduced. And on this head I say that it is very difficult to bring about either of these results, and next to impossible to lay down rules as to how it may be done; because the measures to be taken must vary with the degree of corruption which prevails.

Nevertheless, since it is well to reason things out, I will not pass this matter by, but will assume, in the first place, the case of a very corrupt city, and then take the case of one in which corruption has reached a still greater height; but where corruption is universal, no laws or institutions will ever have force to restrain it. Because as good customs stand in need of good laws for their support, so laws, that they may be respected, stand in need of good customs. Moreover, the laws and institutions established in a republic at its beginning, when men were good, are no longer suitable when they have become bad; but while the laws of a city are altered to suit its circumstances, its institutions rarely or never change; whence it results that the introduction of new laws is of no avail, because the institutions, remaining unchanged, corrupt them.

And to make this plainer, I say that in Rome it was first of all

the institutions of the State, and next the laws as enforced by the magistrates, which kept the citizens under control. The institutions of the State consisted in the authority of the people, the senate, the tribunes, and the consuls; in the methods of choosing and appointing magistrates; and in the arrangements for passing laws. These institutions changed little, if at all, with circumstances. But the laws by which the people were controlled, as for instance the law relating to adultery, the sumptuary laws, the law as to canvassing at elections, and many others, were altered as the citizens grew more and more corrupted. Hence, the institutions of the State remaining the same although from the corruption of the people no longer suitable, amendments in the laws could not keep men good, though they might have proved very useful if at the time when they were made the institutions had likewise been reformed.

That its original institutions are no longer adapted to a city that has become corrupted, is plainly seen in two matters of great moment, I mean in the appointment of magistrates and in the passing of laws. For the Roman people conferred the consulship and other great offices of their State on none save those who sought them; which was a good institution at first, because then none sought these offices save those who thought themselves worthy of them, and to be rejected was held disgraceful; so that, to be deemed worthy, all were on their best behaviour. But in a corrupted city this institution grew to be most mischievous. For it was no longer those of greatest worth, but those who had most influence, who sought the magistracies; while all who were without influence, however

deserving, refrained through fear. This untoward result was not reached all at once, but like other similar results, by gradual steps. For after subduing Africa and Asia, and reducing nearly the whole of Greece to submission, the Romans became perfectly assured of their freedom, and seemed to themselves no longer to have any enemy whom they had cause to fear. But this security and the weakness of their adversaries led them in conferring the consulship, no longer to look to merit, but only to favour, selecting for the office those who knew best how to pay court to them, not those who knew best how to vanquish their enemies. And afterwards, instead of selecting those who were best liked, they came to select those who had most influence; and in this way, from the imperfection of their institutions, good men came to be wholly excluded.

Again, as to making laws, any of the tribunes and certain others of the magistrates were entitled to submit laws to the people; but before these were passed it was open to every citizen to speak either for or against them. This was a good system so long as the citizens were good, since it is always well that every man should be able to propose what he thinks may be of use to his country, and that all should be allowed to express their views with regard to his proposal; so that the people, having heard all, may resolve on what is best. But when the people grew depraved, this became a very mischievous institution; for then it was only the powerful who proposed laws, and these not in the interest of public freedom but of their own authority; and because, through fear, none durst speak against the laws they proposed, the people were either deceived or forced into voting their own destruction.

In order, therefore, that Rome after she had become corrupted might still preserve her freedom, it was necessary that, as in the course of events she had made new laws, so likewise she should frame new institutions, since different institutions and ordinances are needed in a corrupt State from those which suit a State which is not corrupted; for where the matter is wholly dissimilar, the form cannot be similar.

But since old institutions must either be reformed all at once, as soon as they are seen to be no longer expedient, or else gradually, as the imperfection of each is recognized, I say that each of these two courses is all but impossible. For to effect a gradual reform requires a sagacious man who can discern mischief while it is still remote and in the germ. But it may well happen that no such person is found in a city; or that, if found, he is unable to persuade others of what he is himself persuaded. For men used to live in one way are loath to leave it for another, especially when they are not brought face to face with the evil against which they should guard, and only have it indicated to them by conjecture. And as for a sudden reform of institutions which are seen by all to be no longer good, I say that defects which are easily discerned are not easily corrected, because for their correction it is not enough to use ordinary means, these being in themselves insufficient; but recourse must be had to extraordinary means, such as violence and arms; and, as a preliminary, you must become prince of the city, and be able to deal with it at your pleasure. But since the restoration of a State to new political life presupposes a good man, and to become prince of

a city by violence presupposes a bad man, it can, consequently, very seldom happen that, although the end be good, a good man will be found ready to become a prince by evil ways, or that a bad man having become a prince will be disposed to act virtuously, or think of turning to good account his ill-acquired authority.

From all these causes comes the difficulty, or rather the impossibility, which a corrupted city finds in maintaining an existing free government, or in establishing a new one. So that had we to establish or maintain a government in that city, it would be necessary to give it a monarchical, rather than a popular form, in order that men too arrogant to be restrained by the laws, might in some measure be kept in check by a power almost absolute; since to attempt to make them good otherwise would be a very cruel or a wholly futile endeavour. This, as I have said, was the method followed by Cleomenes; and if he, that he might stand alone, put to death the Ephori; and if Romulus, with a like object, put to death his brother and Titus Tatius the Sabine, and if both afterwards made good use of the authority they thus acquired, it is nevertheless to be remembered that it was because neither Cleomenes nor Romulus had to deal with so corrupt a people as that of which I am now speaking, that they were able to effect their ends and to give a fair colour to their acts.

CHAPTER XIX.--After a strong Prince a weak Prince may maintain himself: but after one weak Prince no Kingdom can stand a second.

When we contemplate the excellent qualities of Romulus, Numa, and Tullus, the first three kings of Rome, and note the methods which they followed, we recognize the extreme good fortune of that city in having her first king fierce and warlike, her second peaceful and religious, and her third, like the first, of a high spirit and more disposed to war than to peace. For it was essential for Rome that almost at the outset of her career, a ruler should be found to lay the foundations of her civil life; but, after that had been done, it was necessary that her rulers should return to the virtues of Romulus, since otherwise the city must have grown feeble, and become a prey to her neighbours.

And here we may note that a prince who succeeds to another of superior valour, may reign on by virtue of his predecessor's merits, and reap the fruits of his labours; but if he live to a great age, or if he be followed by another who is wanting in the qualities of the first, that then the kingdom must necessarily dwindle. Conversely, when two consecutive princes are of rare excellence, we commonly find them achieving results which win for them enduring renown. David, for example, not only surpassed in learning and judgment, but was so valiant in arms that, after conquering and subduing all his neighbours, he left to his young son Solomon a tranquil State, which the latter, though unskilled in the arts of war, could maintain by the arts of peace, and thus happily enjoy the inheritance of his father's valour. But Solomon

could not transmit this inheritance to his son Rehoboam, who neither resembling his grandfather in valour, nor his father in good fortune, with difficulty made good his right to a sixth part of the kingdom. In like manner Bajazet, sultan of the Turks, though a man of peace rather than of war, was able to enjoy the labours of Mahomet his father, who, like David, having subdued his neighbours, left his son a kingdom so safely established that it could easily be retained by him by peaceful arts. But had Selim, son to Bajazet, been like his father, and not like his grandfather, the Turkish monarchy must have been overthrown; as it is, he seems likely to outdo the fame of his grandsire.

I affirm it to be proved by these examples, that after a valiant prince a feeble prince may maintain himself; but that no kingdom can stand when two feeble princes follow in succession, unless, as in the case of France, it be supported by its ancient ordinances. By feeble princes, I mean such as are not valiant in war. And, to put the matter shortly, it may be said, that the great valour of Romulus left Numa a period of many years within which to govern Rome by peaceful arts; that after Numa came Tullus, who renewed by his courage the fame of Romulus; and that he in turn was succeeded by Ancus, a prince so gifted by nature that he could equally avail himself of the methods of peace or war; who setting himself at first to pursue the former, when he found that his neighbours judged him to be effeminate, and therefore held him in slight esteem, understood that to preserve Rome he must resort to arms and resemble Romulus rather than Numa. From whose example every ruler of a State may learn that a prince like Numa will hold or lose his power according

as fortune and circumstances befriend him; but that the prince who resembles Romulus, and like him is fortified with foresight and arms, will hold his State whatever befall, unless deprived of it by some stubborn and irresistible force. For we may reckon with certainty that if Rome had not had for her third king one who knew how to restore her credit by deeds of valour, she could not, or at any rate not without great difficulty, have afterwards held her ground, nor could ever have achieved the great exploits she did.

And for these reasons Rome, while she lived under her kings, was in constant danger of destruction through a king who might be weak or bad.

CHAPTER XX.--That the consecutive Reigns of two valiant Princes produce great results: and that well-ordered Commonwealths are assured of a Succession of valiant Rulers by whom their Power and Growth are rapidly extended.

When Rome had driven out her kings, she was freed from those dangers to which, as I have said, she was exposed by the possible succession of a weak or wicked prince. For the chief share in the government then devolved upon the consuls, who took their authority not by inheritance, nor yet by craft or by ambitious violence, but by the free suffrages of their fellow-citizens, and were always men of signal worth; by whose valour and good fortune Rome being constantly aided, was able to reach the height of her greatness in the same number of years as she had lived under her kings. And since we find that two successive reigns of valiant princes, as of Philip of Macedon and his son Alexander, suffice to conquer the world, this ought to be still easier for a commonwealth, which has it in its power to choose, not two excellent rulers only, but an endless number in succession. And in every well ordered commonwealth provision will be made for a succession of this sort.

CHAPTER XXI.--That it is a great reproach to a Prince or to a Commonwealth to be without a national Army.

Those princes and republics of the present day who lack forces of their own, whether for attack or defence, should take shame to themselves, and should be convinced by the example of Tullus, that their deficiency does not arise from want of men fit for warlike enterprises, but from their own fault in not knowing how to make their subjects good soldiers. For after Rome had been at peace for forty years, Tullus, succeeding to the kingdom, found not a single Roman who had ever been in battle. Nevertheless when he made up his mind to enter on a war, it never occurred to him to have recourse to the Samnites, or the Etruscans, or to any other of the neighbouring nations accustomed to arms, but he resolved, like the prudent prince he was, to rely on his own countrymen. And such was his ability that, under his rule, the people very soon became admirable soldiers. For nothing is more true than that where a country, having men, lacks soldiers, it results from some fault in its ruler, and not from any defect in the situation or climate. Of this we have a very recent instance. Every one knows, how, only the other day, the King of England invaded the realm of France with an army raised wholly from among his own people, although from his country having been at peace for thirty years, he had neither men nor officers who had ever looked an enemy in the face. Nevertheless, he did not hesitate with such troops as he had, to attack a kingdom well provided with officers and excellent soldiers who had been constantly under arms in the Italian wars. And this was possible through the prudence of the English king and

the wise ordinances of his kingdom, which never in time of peace relaxes its warlike discipline. So too, in old times, Pelopidas and Epaminondas the Thebans, after they had freed Thebes from her tyrants, and rescued her from thraldom to Sparta, finding themselves in a city used to servitude and surrounded by an effeminate people, scrupled not, so great was their courage, to furnish these with arms, and go forth with them to meet and to conquer the Spartan forces on the field. And he who relates this, observes, that these two captains very soon showed that warriors are not bred in Lacedæmon alone, but in every country where men are found, if only some one arise among them who knows how to direct them to arms; as we see Tullus knew how to direct the Romans. Nor could Virgil better express this opinion, or show by fitter words that he was convinced of its truth than, when he says:--

"To arms shall Tullus rouse
His sluggish warriors."[1]

[Footnote 1: Residesque movebit Tullus in arma viros. Virg. Aen. vi. 814.]

CHAPTER XXII.--What is to be noted in the combat of the three Roman Horatii and the three Alban Curiatii.

It was agreed between Tullus king of Rome, and Metius king of Alba, that the nation whose champions were victorious in combat should rule over the other. The three Alban Curiatii were slain; one of the Roman Horatii survived. Whereupon the Alban king with all his people became subject to the Romans. The surviving Horatius returning victorious to Rome, and meeting his sister, wife to one of the dead Curiatii, bewailing the death of her husband, slew her; and being tried for this crime, was, after much contention, liberated, rather on the entreaties of his father than for his own deserts.

Herein three points are to be noted. First, that we should never peril our whole fortunes on the success of only a part of our forces. Second, that in a well-governed State, merit should never be allowed to balance crime. And third, that those are never wise covenants which we cannot or should not expect to be observed. Now, for a State to be enslaved is so terrible a calamity that it ought never to have been supposed possible that either of these kings or nations would rest content under a slavery resulting from the defeat of three only of their number. And so it appeared to Metius; for although on the victory of the Roman champions, he at once confessed himself vanquished, and promised obedience; nevertheless, in the very first expedition which he and Tullus undertook jointly against the people of Veii, we find him seeking to circumvent the Roman, as though perceiving too late the rash part he

had played.

This is enough to say of the third point which I noted as deserving attention. Of the other two I shall speak in the next two Chapters.

CHAPTER XXIII.--That we should never hazard our whole Fortunes where we put not forth our entire Strength; for which reason to guard a Defile is often hurtful.

It was never judged a prudent course to peril your whole fortunes where you put not forth your whole strength; as may happen in more ways than one. One of these ways was that taken by Tullus and Metius, when each staked the existence of his country and the credit of his army on the valour and good fortune of three only of his soldiers, that being an utterly insignificant fraction of the force at his disposal. For neither of these kings reflected that all the labours of their predecessors in framing such institutions for their States, as might, with the aid of the citizens themselves, maintain them long in freedom, were rendered futile, when the power to ruin all was left in the hands of so small a number. No rasher step, therefore, could have been taken, than was taken by these kings.

A like risk is almost always incurred by those who, on the approach of an enemy, resolve to defend some place of strength, or to guard the defiles by which their country is entered. For unless room be found in this place of strength for almost all your army, the attempt to hold it will almost always prove hurtful. If you can find room, it will be right to defend your strong places; but if these be difficult of access, and you cannot there keep your entire force together, the effort to defend is mischievous. I come to this conclusion from observing the example of those who, although their territories be enclosed by mountains and

precipices, have not, on being attacked by powerful enemies, attempted to fight on the mountains or in the defiles, but have advanced beyond them to meet their foes; or, if unwilling to advance, have awaited attack behind their mountains, on level and not on broken ground. The reason of which is, as I have above explained, that many men cannot be assembled in these strong places for their defence; partly because a large number of men cannot long subsist there, and partly because such places being narrow and confined, afford room for a few only; so that no enemy can there be withstood, who comes in force to the attack; which he can easily do, his design being to pass on and not to make a stay; whereas he who stands on the defensive cannot do so in force, because, from not knowing when the enemy may enter the confined and sterile tracts of which I speak, he may have to lodge himself there for a long time. But should you lose some pass which you had reckoned on holding, and on the defence of which your country and army have relied, there commonly follows such panic among your people and among the troops which remain to you, that you are vanquished without opportunity given for any display of valour, and lose everything without bringing all your resources into play.

Every one has heard with what difficulty Hannibal crossed the Alps which divide France from Lombardy, and afterwards those which separate Lombardy from Tuscany. Nevertheless the Romans awaited him, in the first instance on the banks of the Ticino, in the second on the plain of Arezzo, preferring to be defeated on ground which at least gave them a chance of victory, to leading their army into mountain fastnesses where

it was likely to be destroyed by the mere difficulties of the ground. And any who read history with attention will find, that very few capable commanders have attempted to hold passes of this nature, as well for the reasons already given, as because to close them all were impossible. For mountains, like plains, are traversed not only by well-known and frequented roads, but also by many by-ways, which, though unknown to strangers, are familiar to the people of the country, under whose guidance you may always, and in spite of any opposition, be easily conducted to whatever point you please. Of this we have a recent instance in the events of the year 1515. For when Francis I. of France resolved on invading Italy in order to recover the province of Lombardy, those hostile to his attempt looked mainly to the Swiss, who it was hoped would stop him in passing through their mountains. But this hope was disappointed by the event. For leaving on one side two or three defiles which were guarded by the Swiss, the king advanced by another unknown pass, and was in Italy and upon his enemies before they knew. Whereupon they fled terror-stricken into Milan; while the whole population of Lombardy, finding themselves deceived in their expectation that the French would be detained in the mountains, went over to their side.

CHAPTER XXIV.--That well-ordered States always provide Rewards and Punishments for their Citizens; and never set off Deserts against Misdeeds.

The valour of Horatius in vanquishing the Curiatii deserved the highest reward. But in slaying his sister he had been guilty of a heinous crime. And so displeasing to the Romans was an outrage of this nature, that although his services were so great and so recent, they brought him to trial for his life. To one looking at it carelessly, this might seem an instance of popular ingratitude, but he who considers the matter more closely, and examines with sounder judgment what the ordinances of a State should be, will rather blame the Roman people for acquitting Horatius than for putting him on his trial. And this because no well-ordered State ever strikes a balance between the services of its citizens and their misdeeds; but appointing rewards for good actions and punishment for bad, when it has rewarded a man for acting well, will afterwards, should he act ill, chastise him, without regard to his former deserts. When these ordinances are duly observed, a city will live long in freedom, but when they are neglected, it must soon come to ruin. For when a citizen has rendered some splendid service to his country, if to the distinction which his action in itself confers, were added an over-weening confidence that any crime he might thenceforth commit would pass unpunished, he would soon become so arrogant that no civil bonds could restrain him.

Still, while we would have punishment terrible to wrongdoers, it is

essential that good actions should be rewarded, as we see to have been the case in Rome. For even where a republic is poor, and has but little to give, it ought not to withhold that little; since a gift, however small, bestowed as a reward for services however great, will always be esteemed most honourable and precious by him who receives it. The story of Horatius Cocles and that of Mutius Scævola are well known: how the one withstood the enemy on the bridge while it was being cut down, and the other thrust his hand into the fire in punishment of the mistake made when he sought the life of Porsenna the Etruscan king. To each of these two, in requital of their splendid deeds, two ploughgates only of the public land were given. Another famous story is that of Manlius Capitolinus, to whom, for having saved the Capitol from the besieging Gauls, a small measure of meal was given by each of those who were shut up with him during the siege. Which recompense, in proportion to the wealth of the citizens of Rome at that time, was thought ample; so that afterwards, when Manlius, moved by jealousy and malice, sought to arouse sedition in Rome, and to gain over the people to his cause, they without regard to his past services threw him headlong from that Capitol in saving which he had formerly gained so great a renown.

CHAPTER XXV.--That he who would reform the Institutions of a free State, must retain at least the semblance of old Ways.

Whoever takes upon him to reform the government of a city, must, if his measures are to be well received and carried out with general approval, preserve at least the semblance of existing methods, so as not to appear to the people to have made any change in the old order of things; although, in truth, the new ordinances differ altogether from those which they replace. For when this is attended to, the mass of mankind accept what seems as what is; nay, are often touched more nearly by appearances than by realities.

This tendency being recognized by the Romans at the very outset of their civil freedom, when they appointed two consuls in place of a single king, they would not permit the consuls to have more than twelve lictors, in order that the old number of the king's attendants might not be exceeded. Again, there being solemnized every year in Rome a sacrificial rite which could only be performed by the king in person, that the people might not be led by the absence of the king to remark the want of any ancient observance, a priest was appointed for the due celebration of this rite, to whom was given the name of Rex sacrificulus, and who was placed under the orders of the chief priest. In this way the people were contented, and had no occasion from any defect in the solemnities to desire the return of their kings. Like precautions should be used by all who would put an end to the old government of a city and substitute new and free institutions. For since

novelty disturbs men's minds, we should seek in the changes we make to preserve as far as possible what is ancient, so that if the new magistrates differ from the old in number, in authority, or in the duration of their office, they shall at least retain the old names.

This, I say, should be seen to by him who would establish a constitutional government, whether in the form of a commonwealth or of a kingdom. But he who would create an absolute government of the kind which political writers term a tyranny, must renew everything, as shall be explained in the following Chapter.

CHAPTER XXVI.--A new Prince in a City or Province of which he has taken Possession, ought to make Everything new.

Whosoever becomes prince of a city or State, more especially if his position be so insecure that he cannot resort to constitutional government either in the form of a republic or a monarchy, will find that the best way to preserve his princedom is to renew the whole institutions of that State; that is to say, to create new magistracies with new names, confer new powers, and employ new men, and like David when he became king, exalt the humble and depress the great, "filling the hungry with good things, and sending the rich empty away." Moreover, he must pull down existing towns and rebuild them, removing their inhabitants from one place to another; and, in short, leave nothing in the country as he found it; so that there shall be neither rank, nor condition, nor honour, nor wealth which its possessor can refer to any but to him. And he must take example from Philip of Macedon, the father of Alexander, who by means such as these, from being a petty prince became monarch of all Greece; and of whom it was written that he shifted men from province to province as a shepherd moves his flocks from one pasture to another.

These indeed are most cruel expedients, contrary not merely to every Christian, but to every civilized rule of conduct, and such as every man should shun, choosing rather to lead a private life than to be a king on terms so hurtful to mankind. But he who will not keep to the fair path of virtue, must to maintain himself enter this path of evil. Men,

however, not knowing how to be wholly good or wholly bad, choose for themselves certain middle ways, which of all others are the most pernicious, as shall be shown by an instance in the following Chapter.

CHAPTER XXVII.--That Men seldom know how to be wholly good or wholly bad.

When in the year 1505, Pope Julius II. went to Bologna to expel from that city the family of the Bentivogli, who had been princes there for over a hundred years, it was also in his mind, as a part of the general design he had planned against all those lords who had usurped Church lands, to remove Giovanpagolo Baglioni, tyrant of Perugia. And coming to Perugia with this intention and resolve, of which all men knew, he would not wait to enter the town with a force sufficient for his protection, but entered it unattended by troops, although Giovanpagolo was there with a great company of soldiers whom he had assembled for his defence. And thus, urged on by that impetuosity which stamped all his actions, accompanied only by his body-guard, he committed himself into the hands of his enemy, whom he forthwith carried away with him, leaving a governor behind to hold the town for the Church. All prudent men who were with the Pope remarked on his temerity, and on the pusillanimity of Giovanpagolo; nor could they conjecture why the latter had not, to his eternal glory, availed himself of this opportunity for crushing his enemy, and at the same time enriching himself with plunder, the Pope being attended by the whole College of Cardinals with all their luxurious equipage. For it could not be supposed that he was withheld by any promptings of goodness or scruples of conscience; because in the breast of a profligate living in incest with his sister, and who to obtain the princedom had put his nephews and kinsmen to death, no virtuous impulse could prevail. So that the only inference to be drawn

was, that men know not how to be splendidly wicked or wholly good, and shrink in consequence from such crimes as are stamped with an inherent greatness or disclose a nobility of nature. For which reason Giovanpagolo, who thought nothing of incurring the guilt of incest, or of murdering his kinsmen, could not, or more truly durst not, avail himself of a fair occasion to do a deed which all would have admired; which would have won for him a deathless fame as the first to teach the prelates how little those who live and reign as they do are to be esteemed; and which would have displayed a greatness far transcending any infamy or danger that could attach to it.

CHAPTER XXVIII.--Whence it came that the Romans were less ungrateful to their Citizens than were the Athenians.

In the histories of all republics we meet with instances of some sort of ingratitude to their great citizens, but fewer in the history of Rome than of Athens, or indeed of any other republic. Searching for the cause of this, I am persuaded that, so far as regards Rome and Athens, it was due to the Romans having had less occasion than the Athenians to look upon their fellow-citizens with suspicion For, from the expulsion of her kings down to the times of Sylla and Marius, the liberty of Rome was never subverted by any one of her citizens; so that there never was in that city grave cause for distrusting any man, and in consequence making him the victim of inconsiderate injustice. The reverse was notoriously the case with Athens; for that city, having, at a time when she was most flourishing, been deprived of her freedom by Pisistratus under a false show of good-will, remembering, after she regained her liberty, her former bondage and all the wrongs she had endured, became the relentless chastiser, not of offences only on the part of her citizens, but even of the shadow of an offence. Hence the banishment and death of so many excellent men, and hence the law of ostracism, and all those other violent measures which from time to time during the history of that city were directed against her foremost citizens. For this is most true which is asserted by the writers on civil government, that a people which has recovered its freedom, bites more fiercely than one which has always preserved it.

And any who shall weigh well what has been said, will not condemn Athens in this matter, nor commend Rome, but refer all to the necessity arising out of the different conditions prevailing in the two States. For careful reflection will show that had Rome been deprived of her freedom as Athens was, she would not have been a whit more tender to her citizens. This we may reasonably infer from remarking what, after the expulsion of the kings, befell Collatinus and Publius Valerius; the former of whom, though he had taken part in the liberation of Rome, was sent into exile for no other reason than that he bore the name of Tarquin; while the sole ground of suspicion against the latter, and what almost led to his banishment, was his having built a house upon the Cælian hill. Seeing how harsh and suspicious Rome was in these two instances, we may surmise that she would have shown the same ingratitude as Athens, had she, like Athens, been wronged by her citizens at an early stage of her growth, and before she had attained to the fulness of her strength.

That I may not have to return to this question of ingratitude, I shall say all that remains to be said about it in my next Chapter.

CHAPTER XXIX.--Whether a People or a Prince is the more ungrateful.

In connection with what has been said above, it seems proper to consider whether more notable instances of ingratitude are supplied by princes or peoples. And, to go to the root of the matter, I affirm that this vice of ingratitude has its source either in avarice or in suspicion. For a prince or people when they have sent forth a captain on some important enterprise, by succeeding in which he earns a great name, are bound in return to reward him; and if moved by avarice and covetousness they fail to do so, or if, instead of rewarding, they wrong and disgrace him, they commit an error which is not only without excuse, but brings with it undying infamy. And, in fact, we find many princes who have sinned in this way, for the cause given by Cornelius Tacitus when he says, that "men are readier to pay back injuries than benefits, since to requite a benefit is felt to be a burthen, to return an injury a gain."[1]

When, however, reward is withheld, or, to speak more correctly, where offence is given, not from avarice but from suspicion, the prince or people may deserve some excuse; and we read of many instances of ingratitude proceeding from this cause. For the captain who by his valour has won new dominions for his prince, since while overcoming his enemies, he at the same time covers himself with glory and enriches his soldiers, must needs acquire such credit with his own followers, and with the enemy, and also with the subjects of his prince, as cannot be wholly agreeable to the master who sent him forth. And since men are by nature ambitious as well as jealous, and none loves to set a limit to

his fortunes, the suspicion which at once lays hold of the prince when he sees his captain victorious, is sure to be inflamed by some arrogant act or word of the captain himself. So that the prince will be unable to think of anything but how to secure himself; and to this end will contrive how he may put his captain to death, or at any rate deprive him of the credit he has gained with the army and among the people; doing all he can to show that the victory was not won by his valour, but by good fortune, or by the cowardice of the enemy, or by the skill and prudence of those commanders who were with him at this or the other battle.

After Vespasian, who was then in Judæa, had been proclaimed emperor by his army, Antonius Primus, who commanded another army in Illyria, adopted his cause, and marching into Italy against Vitellius who had been proclaimed emperor in Rome, courageously defeated two armies under that prince, and occupied Rome; so that Mutianus, who was sent thither by Vespasian, found everything done to his hand, and all difficulties surmounted by the valour of Antonius. But all the reward which Antonius had for his pains, was, that Mutianus forthwith deprived him of his command of the army, and by degrees diminished his authority in Rome till none was left him. Thereupon Antonius went to join Vespasian, who was still in Asia; by whom he was so coldly received and so little considered, that in despair he put himself to death. And of cases like this, history is full. Every man living at the present hour knows with what zeal and courage Gonsalvo of Cordova, while conducting the war in Naples against the French, conquered and subdued that kingdom for his

master Ferdinand of Aragon; and how his services were requited by Ferdinand coming from Aragon to Naples, and first of all depriving him of the command of the army, afterwards of the fortresses, and finally carrying him back with him to Spain, where soon after he died in disgrace.

This jealousy, then, is so natural to princes, that they cannot guard themselves against it, nor show gratitude to those who serving under their standard have gained great victories and made great conquests on their behalf. And if it be impossible for princes to free their minds from such suspicions, there is nothing strange or surprising that a people should be unable to do so. For as a city living under free institutions has two ends always before it, namely to acquire liberty and to preserve it, it must of necessity be led by its excessive passion for liberty to make mistakes in the pursuit of both these objects. Of the mistakes it commits in the effort to acquire liberty, I shall speak, hereafter, in the proper place. Of mistakes committed in the endeavour to preserve liberty are to be noted, the injuring those citizens who ought to be rewarded, and the suspecting those who should be trusted. Now, although in a State which has grown corrupt these errors occasion great evils, and commonly lead to a tyranny, as happened in Rome when Cæsar took by force what ingratitude had denied him, they are nevertheless the cause of much good in the republic which has not been corrupted, since they prolong the duration of its free institutions, and make men, through fear of punishment, better and less ambitious. Of all peoples possessed of great power, the Romans, for the reasons I have

given, have undoubtedly been the least ungrateful, since we have no other instance of their ingratitude to cite, save that of Scipio. For both Coriolanus and Camillus were banished on account of the wrongs which they inflicted on the commons; and though the former was not forgiven because he constantly retained ill will against the people, the latter was not only recalled, but for the rest of his life honoured as a prince. But the ingratitude shown towards Scipio arose from the suspicion wherewith the citizens came to regard him, which they had not felt in the case of the others, and which was occasioned by the greatness of the enemy whom he had overthrown, the fame he had won by prevailing in so dangerous and protracted a war, the suddenness of his victories, and, finally, the favour which his youth, together with his prudence and his other memorable qualities had gained for him. These qualities were, in truth, so remarkable that the very magistrates, not to speak of others, stood in awe of his authority, a circumstance displeasing to prudent citizens, as before unheard of in Rome. In short, his whole bearing and character were so much out of the common, that even the elder Cato, so celebrated for his austere virtue, was the first to declare against him, saying that no city could be deemed free which contained a citizen who was feared by the magistrates. And since, in this instance, the Romans followed the opinion of Cato, they merit that excuse which, as I have said already, should be extended to the prince or people who are ungrateful through suspicion.

In conclusion it is to be said that while this vice of ingratitude has its origin either in avarice or in suspicion, commonwealths are rarely

led into it by avarice, and far seldomer than princes by suspicion, having, as shall presently be shown, far less reason than princes for suspecting.

[Footnote 1: Proclivius est injuriæ quam beneficio vicem exsolvere, quia gratia oneri, ultio in quastu habetur. Tacit. Hist. iv. 2.]

CHAPTER XXX.--How Princes and Commonwealths may avoid the vice of Ingratitude; and how a Captain or Citizen may escape being undone by it.

That he may not be tormented by suspicion, nor show ungrateful, a prince should go himself on his wars as the Roman emperors did at first, as the Turk does now, and, in short, as all valiant princes have done and do. For when it is the prince himself who conquers, the glory and the gain are all his own; but when he is absent, since the glory is another's, it will seem to the prince that he profits nothing by the gain, unless that glory be quenched which he knew not how to win for himself; and when he thus becomes ungrateful and unjust, doubtless his loss is greater than his gain. To the prince, therefore, who, either through indolence or from want of foresight, sends forth a captain to conduct his wars while he himself remains inactive at home, I have no advice to offer which he does not already know. But I would counsel the captain whom he sends, since I am sure that he can never escape the attacks of ingratitude, to follow one or other of two courses, and either quit his command at once after a victory, and place himself in the hands of his prince, while carefully abstaining from every vainglorious or ambitious act, so that the prince, being relieved from all suspicion, may be disposed to reward, or at any rate not to injure him; or else, should he think it inexpedient for him to act in this way, to take boldly the contrary course, and fearlessly to follow out all such measures as he thinks will secure for himself, and not for his prince, whatever he has gained; conciliating the good-will of his soldiers and fellow-citizens, forming

new friendships with neighbouring potentates, placing his own adherents in fortified towns, corrupting the chief officers of his army and getting rid of those whom he fails to corrupt, and by all similar means endeavouring to punish his master for the ingratitude which he looks for at his hands. These are the only two courses open; but since, as I said before, men know not how to be wholly good or wholly bad, it will never happen that after a victory a captain will quit his army and conduct himself modestly, nor yet that he will venture to use those hardy methods which have in them some strain of greatness; and so, remaining undecided, he will be crushed while he still wavers and doubts.

A commonwealth desiring to avoid the vice of ingratitude is, as compared with a prince, at this disadvantage, that while a prince can go himself on his expeditions, the commonwealth must send some one of its citizens. As a remedy, I would recommend that course being adopted which was followed by the Roman republic in order to be less ungrateful than others, having its origin in the nature of the Roman government. For the whole city, nobles and commons alike, taking part in her wars, there were always found in Rome at every stage of her history, so many valiant and successful soldiers, that by reason of their number, and from one acting as a check upon another, the nation had never ground to be jealous of any one man among them; while they, on their part, lived uprightly, and were careful to betray no sign of ambition, nor give the people the least cause to distrust them as ambitious; so that he obtained most glory from his dictatorship who was first to lay it down. Which conduct, as it excited no suspicion, could occasion no

ingratitude.

We see, then, that the commonwealth which would have no cause to be ungrateful, must act as Rome did; and that the citizen who would escape ingratitude, must observe those precautions which were observed by Roman citizens.

CHAPTER XXXI.--That the Roman Captains were never punished with extreme severity for Misconduct; and where loss resulted to the Republic merely through their Ignorance or Want of Judgment, were not punished at all.

The Romans were not only, as has been said above, less ungrateful than other republics, but were also more lenient and more considerate than others in punishing the captains of their armies. For if these erred of set purpose, they chastised them with gentleness; while if they erred through ignorance, so far from punishing, they even honoured and rewarded them. And this conduct was well considered. For as they judged it of the utmost moment, that those in command of their armies should, in all they had to do, have their minds undisturbed and free from external anxieties, they would not add further difficulty and danger to a task in itself both dangerous and difficult, lest none should ever be found to act with valour. For supposing them to be sending forth an army against Philip of Macedon in Greece or against Hannibal in Italy, or against any other enemy at whose hands they had already sustained reverses, the captain in command of that expedition would be weighted with all the grave and important cares which attend such enterprises. But if to all these cares, had been added the example of Roman generals crucified or otherwise put to death for having lost battles, it would have been impossible for a commander surrounded by so many causes for anxiety to have acted with vigour and decision. For which reason, and because they thought that to such persons the mere ignominy of defeat was in itself punishment enough, they would not dishearten their generals by inflicting on them any heavier penalty.

Of errors committed not through ignorance, the following is an instance. Sergius and Virginius were engaged in the siege of Veii, each being in command of a division of the army, and while Sergius was set to guard against the approach of the Etruscans, it fell to Virginius to watch the town. But Sergius being attacked by the Faliscans and other tribes, chose rather to be defeated and routed than ask aid from Virginius, who, on his part, awaiting the humiliation of his rival, was willing to see his country dishonoured and an army destroyed, sooner than go unasked to his relief. This was notable misconduct, and likely, unless both offenders were punished, to bring discredit on the Roman name. But whereas another republic would have punished these men with death, the Romans were content to inflict only a money fine: not because the offence did not in itself deserve severe handling, but because they were unwilling, for the reasons already given, to depart in this instance from their ancient practice.

Of errors committed through ignorance we have no better example than in the case of Varro, through whose rashness the Romans were defeated by Hannibal at Cannæ, where the republic well-nigh lost its liberty. But because he had acted through ignorance and with no evil design, they not only refrained from punishing him, but even treated him with distinction; the whole senate going forth to meet him on his return to Rome, and as they could not thank him for having fought, thanking him for having come back, and for not having despaired of the fortunes his country.

Again, when Papirius Cursor would have had Fabius put to death, because, contrary to his orders, he had fought with the Samnites, among the reasons pleaded by the father of Fabius against the persistency of the dictator, he urged that never on the occasion of the defeat of any of their captains had the Romans done what Papirius desired them to do on the occasion of a victory.

CHAPTER XXXII.--That a Prince or Commonwealth should not delay conferring Benefits until they are themselves in difficulties.

The Romans found it for their advantage to be generous to the commons at a season of danger, when Porsenna came to attack Rome and restore the Tarquins. For the senate, apprehending that the people might choose rather to take back their kings than to support a war, secured their adherence by relieving them of the duty on salt and of all their other burthens; saying that "the poor did enough for the common welfare in rearing their offspring." In return for which indulgence the commons were content to undergo war, siege, and famine. Let no one however, relying on this example, delay conciliating the people till danger has actually come; or, if he do, let him not hope to have the same good fortune as the Romans. For the mass of the people will consider that they have to thank not him, but his enemies, and that there is ground to fear that when the danger has passed away, he will take back what he gave under compulsion, and, therefore, that to him they lie under no obligation. And the reason why the course followed by the Romans succeeded, was that the State was still new and unsettled. Besides which, the people knew that laws had already been passed in their favour, as, for instance, the law allowing an appeal to the tribunes, and could therefore persuade themselves that the benefits granted them proceeded from the good-will entertained towards them by the senate, and were not due merely to the approach of an enemy. Moreover, the memory of their kings, by whom they had in many ways been wronged and ill-treated, was still fresh in their minds. But since like conditions seldom recur,

it can only rarely happen that like remedies are useful. Wherefore, all, whether princes or republics, who hold the reins of government, ought to think beforehand of the adverse times which may await them, and of what help they may then stand in need; and ought so to live with their people as they would think right were they suffering under any calamity. And, whosoever, whether prince or republic, but prince more especially, behaves otherwise, and believes that after the event and when danger is upon him he will be able to win men over by benefits, deceives himself, and will not merely fail to maintain his place, but will even precipitate his downfall.

CHAPTER XXXIII.--When a Mischief has grown up in, or against a State, it is safer to temporize with than to meet it with Violence.

As Rome grew in fame, power, and dominion, her neighbours, who at first had taken no heed to the injury which this new republic might do them, began too late to see their mistake, and desiring to remedy what should have been remedied before, combined against her to the number of forty nations. Whereupon the Romans, resorting to a method usual with them in seasons of peril, appointed a dictator; that is, gave power to one man to decide without advice, and carry out his resolves without appeal. Which expedient, as it then enabled them to overcome the dangers by which they were threatened, so always afterwards proved most serviceable, when, at any time during the growth of their power, difficulties arose to embarrass their republic.

In connection with this league against Rome we have first to note, that when a mischief which springs up either in or against a republic, and whether occasioned by internal or external causes, has grown to such proportions that it begins to fill the whole community with alarm, it is a far safer course to temporize with it than to attempt to quell it by violence. For commonly those who make this attempt only add fuel to the flame, and hasten the impending ruin. Such disorders arise in a republic more often from internal causes than external, either through some citizen being suffered to acquire undue influence, or from the corruption of some institution of that republic, which had once been the life and sinew of its freedom; and from this corruption being allowed to

gain such head that the attempt to check it is more dangerous than to let it be. And it is all the harder to recognize these disorders in their beginning, because it seems natural to men to look with favour on the beginnings of things. Favour of this sort, more than by anything else, is attracted by those actions which seem to have in them a quality of greatness, or which are performed by the young. For when in a republic some young man is seen to come forward endowed with rare excellence, the eyes of all the citizens are at once turned upon him, and all, without distinction, concur to do him honour; so that if he have one spark of ambition, the advantages which he has from nature, together with those he takes from this favourable disposition of men's minds, raise him to such a pitch of power, that when the citizens at last see their mistake it is almost impossible for them to correct it; and when they do what they can to oppose his influence the only result is to extend it. Of this I might cite numerous examples, but shall content myself with one relating to our own city.

Cosimo de' Medici, to whom the house of the Medici in Florence owes the origin of its fortunes, acquired so great a name from the favour wherewith his own prudence and the blindness of others invested him, that coming to be held in awe by the government, his fellow-citizens deemed it dangerous to offend him, but still more dangerous to let him alone. Nicolò da Uzzano, his cotemporary, who was accounted well versed in all civil affairs, but who had made a first mistake in not discerning the dangers which might grow from the rising influence of Cosimo, would never while he lived, permit a second mistake to be made in attempting

to crush him; judging that such an attempt would be the ruin of the State, as in truth it proved after his death. For some who survived him, disregarding his counsels, combined against Cosimo and banished him from Florence. And so it came about that the partisans of Cosimo, angry at the wrong done him, soon afterwards recalled him and made him prince of the republic, a dignity he never would have reached but for this open opposition. The very same thing happened in Rome in the case of Cæsar. For his services having gained him the good-will of Pompey and other citizens, their favour was presently turned to fear, as Cicero testifies where he says that "it was late that Pompey began to fear Cæsar." This fear led men to think of remedies, and the remedies to which they resorted accelerated the destruction of the republic.

I say, then, that since it is difficult to recognize these disorders in their beginning, because of the false impressions which things produce at the first, it is a wiser course when they become known, to temporize with them than to oppose them; for when you temporize, either they die out of themselves, or at any rate the injury they do is deferred. And the prince who would suppress such disorders or oppose himself to their force and onset, must always be on his guard, lest he help where he would hinder, retard when he would advance, and drown the plant he thinks to water. He must therefore study well the symptoms of the disease; and, if he believe himself equal to the cure, grapple with it fearlessly; if not, he must let it be, and not attempt to treat it in any way. For, otherwise, it will fare with him as it fared with those neighbours of Rome, for whom it would have been safer, after that city

had grown to be so great, to have sought to soothe and restrain her by peaceful arts, than to provoke her by open war to contrive new means of attack and new methods of defence. For this league had no other effect than to make the Romans more united and resolute than before, and to bethink themselves of new expedients whereby their power was still more rapidly advanced; among which was the creation of a dictator; for this innovation not only enabled them to surmount the dangers which then threatened them, but was afterwards the means of escaping infinite calamities into which, without it, the republic must have fallen.

CHAPTER XXXIV.--That the authority of the Dictator did good and not harm to the Roman Republic: and that it is not those Powers which are given by the free suffrages of the People, but those which ambitious Citizens usurp for themselves, that are pernicious to a State.

Those citizens who first devised a dictatorship for Rome have been blamed by certain writers, as though this had been the cause of the tyranny afterwards established there. For these authors allege that the first tyrant of Rome governed it with the title of Dictator, and that, but for the existence of the office, Cæsar could never have cloaked his usurpation under a constitutional name. He who first took up this opinion had not well considered the matter, and his conclusion has been accepted without good ground. For it was not the name nor office of Dictator which brought Rome to servitude, but the influence which certain of her citizens were able to assume from the prolongation of their term of power; so that even had the name of Dictator been wanting in Rome, some other had been found to serve their ends, since power may readily give titles, but not titles power. We find, accordingly, that while the dictatorship was conferred in conformity with public ordinances, and not through personal influence, it was constantly beneficial to the city. For it is the magistracies created and the powers usurped in unconstitutional ways that hurt a republic, not those which conform to ordinary rule; so that in Rome, through the whole period of her history, we never find a dictator who acted otherwise than well for the republic. For which there were the plainest reasons. In the first place, to enable a citizen to work harm and to acquire undue

authority, many circumstances must be present which never can be present in a State which is not corrupted. For such a citizen must be exceedingly rich, and must have many retainers and partisans, whom he cannot have where the laws are strictly observed, and who, if he had them, would occasion so much alarm, that the free suffrage of the people would seldom be in his favour. In the second place, the dictator was not created for life, but for a fixed term, and only to meet the emergency for which he was appointed. Power was indeed given him to determine by himself what measures the exigency demanded; to do what he had to do without consultation; and to punish without appeal. But he had no authority to do anything to the prejudice of the State, as it would have been to deprive the senate or the people of their privileges, to subvert the ancient institutions of the city, or introduce new. So that taking into account the brief time for which his office lasted, its limited authority, and the circumstance that the Roman people were still uncorrupted, it was impossible for him to overstep the just limits of his power so as to injure the city; and in fact we find that he was always useful to it.

And, in truth, among the institutions of Rome, this of the dictatorship deserves our special admiration, and to be linked with the chief causes of her greatness; for without some such safeguard a city can hardly pass unharmed through extraordinary dangers. Because as the ordinary institutions of a commonwealth work but slowly, no council and no magistrate having authority to act in everything alone, but in most matters one standing in need of the other, and time being required to

reconcile their differences, the remedies which they provide are most dangerous when they have to be applied in cases which do not brook delay. For which reason, every republic ought to have some resource of this nature provided by its constitution; as we find that the Republic of Venice, one of the best of those now existing, has in cases of urgent danger reserved authority to a few of her citizens, if agreed among themselves, to determine without further consultation what course is to be followed. When a republic is not provided with some safeguard such as this, either it must be ruined by observing constitutional forms, or else, to save it, these must be broken through. But in a republic nothing should be left to be effected by irregular methods, because, although for the time the irregularity may be useful, the example will nevertheless be pernicious, as giving rise to a practice of violating the laws for good ends, under colour of which they may afterwards be violated for ends which are not good. For which reason, that can never become a perfect republic wherein every contingency has not been foreseen and provided for by the laws, and the method of dealing with it defined. To sum up, therefore, I say that those republics which cannot in sudden emergencies resort either to a dictator or to some similar authority, will, when the danger is serious, always be undone.

We may note, moreover, how prudently the Romans, in introducing this new office, contrived the conditions under which it was to be exercised. For perceiving that the appointment of a dictator involved something of humiliation for the consuls, who, from being the heads of the State, were reduced to render obedience like every one else, and anticipating

that this might give offence, they determined that the power to appoint should rest with the consuls, thinking that when the occasion came when Rome should have need of this regal authority, they would have the consuls acting willingly and feeling the less aggrieved from the appointment being in their own hands. For those wounds or other injuries which a man inflicts upon himself by choice, and of his own free will, pain him far less than those inflicted by another. Nevertheless, in the later days of the republic the Romans were wont to entrust this power to a consul instead of to a dictator, using the formula, Videat CONSUL ne quid respublica detrimenti capiat.

But to return to the matter in hand, I say briefly, that when the neighbours of Rome sought to crush her, they led her to take measures not merely for her readier defence, but such as enabled her to attack them with a stronger force, with better skill, and with an undivided command.

CHAPTER XXXV--Why the Creation of the Decemvirate in Rome, although brought about by the free and open Suffrage of the Citizens, was hurtful to the Liberties of that Republic

The fact of those ten citizens who were chosen by the Roman people to make laws for Rome, in time becoming her tyrants and depriving her of her freedom, may seem contrary to what I have said above, namely that it is the authority which is violently usurped, and not that conferred by the free suffrages of the people which is injurious to a republic. Here, however, we have to take into account both the mode in which, and the term for which authority is given. Where authority is unrestricted and is conferred for a long term, meaning by that for a year or more, it is always attended with danger, and its results will be good or bad according as the men are good or bad to whom it is committed. Now when we compare the authority of the Ten with that possessed by the dictator, we see that the power placed in the hands of the former was out of all proportion greater than that entrusted to the latter. For when a dictator was appointed there still remained the tribunes, the consuls, and the senate, all of them invested with authority of which the dictator could not deprive them. For even if he could have taken his consulship from one man, or his status as a senator from another, he could not abolish the senatorial rank nor pass new laws. So that the senate, the consuls, and the tribunes continuing to exist with undiminished authority were a check upon him and kept him in the right road. But on the creation of the Ten, the opposite of all this took place. For on their appointment, consuls and tribunes were swept away,

and express powers were given to the new magistrates to make laws and do whatever else they thought fit, with the entire authority of the whole Roman people. So that finding themselves alone without consuls or tribunes to control them, and with no appeal against them to the people, and thus there being none to keep a watch upon them, and further being stimulated by the ambition of Appius, in the second year of their office they began to wax insolent.

Let it be noted, therefore, that when it is said that authority given by the public vote is never hurtful to any commonwealth, it is assumed that the people will never be led to confer that authority without due limitations, or for other than a reasonable term. Should they, however either from being deceived or otherwise blinded, be induced to bestow authority imprudently, as the Romans bestowed it on the Ten, it will always fare with them as with the Romans. And this may readily be understood on reflecting what causes operated to keep the dictator good, what to make the Ten bad, and by observing how those republics which have been accounted well governed, have acted when conferring authority for an extended period, as the Spartans on their kings and the Venetians on their doges; for it will be seen that in both these instances the authority was controlled by checks which made it impossible for it to be abused. But where an uncontrolled authority is given, no security is afforded by the circumstance that the body of the people is not corrupted; for in the briefest possible time absolute authority will make a people corrupt, and obtain for itself friends and partisans. Nor will it be any hindrance to him in whom such authority is vested, that

he is poor and without connections, for wealth and every other advantage will quickly follow, as shall be shown more fully when we discuss the appointment of the Ten.

CHAPTER XXXVI.--That Citizens who have held the higher Offices of a Commonwealth should not disdain the lower.

Under the consuls M. Fabius and Cn. Manlius, the Romans had a memorable victory in a battle fought with the Veientines and the Etruscans, in which Q. Fabius, brother of the consul, who had himself been consul the year before, was slain. This event may lead us to remark how well the methods followed by the city of Rome were suited to increase her power, and how great a mistake is made by other republics in departing from them. For, eager as the Romans were in the pursuit of glory, they never esteemed it a dishonour to obey one whom before they had commanded, or to find themselves serving in the ranks of an army which once they had led. This usage, however, is opposed to the ideas, the rules, and the practice which prevail at the present day, as, for instance, in Venice, where the notion still obtains that a citizen who has filled a great office should be ashamed to accept a less; and where the State itself permits him to decline it. This course, assuming it to lend lustre to individual citizens, is plainly to the disadvantage of the community, which has reason to hope more from, and to trust more to, the citizen who descends from a high office to fill a lower, than him who rises from a low office to fill a high one; for in the latter no confidence can reasonably be placed, unless he be seen to have others about him of such credit and worth that it may be hoped their wise counsels and influence will correct his inexperience. But had the usage which prevails in Venice and in other modern commonwealths and kingdoms, prevailed in Rome whereby he who had once been consul was never afterwards to go with the

army except as consul, numberless results must have followed detrimental to the free institutions of that city; as well from the mistakes which the inexperience of new men would have occasioned, as because from their ambition having a freer course, and from their having none near them in whose presence they might fear to do amiss, they would have grown less scrupulous; and in this way the public service must have suffered grave harm.

CHAPTER XXXVII.--Of the Mischief bred in Rome by the Agrarian Law: and how it is a great source of disorder in a Commonwealth to pass a Law opposed to ancient Usage and with stringent retrospective Effect.

It has been said by ancient writers that to be pinched by adversity or pampered by prosperity is the common lot of men, and that in whichever way they are acted upon the result is the same. For when no longer urged to war on one another by necessity, they are urged by ambition, which has such dominion in their hearts that it never leaves them to whatsoever heights they climb. For nature has so ordered it that while they desire everything, it is impossible for them to have everything, and thus their desires being always in excess of their capacity to gratify them, they remain constantly dissatisfied and discontented. And hence the vicissitudes in human affairs. For some seeking to enlarge their possessions, and some to keep what they have got, wars and enmities ensue, from which result the ruin of one country and the growth of another.

I am led to these reflections from observing that the commons of Rome were not content to secure themselves against the nobles by the creation of tribunes, a measure to which they were driven by necessity, but after effecting this, forthwith entered upon an ambitious contest with the nobles, seeking to share with them what all men most esteem, namely, their honours and their wealth. Hence was bred that disorder from which sprang the feuds relating to the Agrarian Laws, and which led in the end to the downfall of the Roman republic. And although it should be the

object of every well-governed commonwealth to make the State rich and keep individual citizens poor it must be allowed that in the matter of this law the city of Rome was to blame; whether for having passed it at first in such a shape as to require it to be continually recast; or for having postponed it so long that its retrospective effect was the occasion of tumult; or else, because, although rightly framed at first, it had come in its operation to be perverted. But in whatever way it happened, so it was, that this law was never spoken of in Rome without the whole city being convulsed.

The law itself embraced two principal provisions. By one it was enacted that no citizen should possess more than a fixed number of acres of land; by the other that all lands taken from the enemy should be distributed among the whole people. A twofold blow was thus aimed at the nobles; since all who possessed more land than the law allowed, as most of the nobles did, fell to be deprived of it; while by dividing the lands of the enemy among the whole people, the road to wealth was closed. These two grounds of offence being given to a powerful class, to whom it appeared that by resisting the law they did a service to the State, the whole city, as I have said, was thrown into an uproar on the mere mention of its name. The nobles indeed sought to temporize, and to prevail by patience and address; sometimes calling out the army, sometimes opposing another tribune to the one who was promoting the law, and sometimes coming to a compromise by sending a colony into the lands which were to be divided; as was done in the case of the territory of Antium, whither, on a dispute concerning the law having arisen, settlers

were sent from Rome, and the land made over to them. In speaking of which colony Titus Livius makes the notable remark, that hardly any one in Rome could be got to take part in it, so much readier were the commons to indulge in covetous schemes at home, than to realize them by leaving it.

The ill humour engendered by this contest continued to prevail until the Romans began to carry their arms into the remoter parts of Italy and to countries beyond its shores; after which it seemed for a time to slumber--and this, because the lands held by the enemies of Rome, out of sight of her citizens and too remote to be conveniently cultivated, came to be less desired. Whereupon the Romans grew less eager to punish their enemies by dividing their lands, and were content, when they deprived any city of its territory, to send colonists to occupy it. For causes such as these, the measure remained in abeyance down to the time of the Gracchi; but being by them revived, finally overthrew the liberty of Rome. For as it found the power of its adversaries doubled, such a flame of hatred was kindled between commons and senate, that, regardless of all civil restraints, they resorted to arms and bloodshed. And as the public magistrates were powerless to provide a remedy, each of the two factions having no longer any hopes from them, resolved to do what it could for itself, and to set up a chief for its own protection. On reaching this stage of tumult and disorder, the commons lent their influence to Marius, making him four times consul; whose authority, lasting thus long, and with very brief intervals, became so firmly rooted that he was able to make himself consul other three times.

Against this scourge, the nobles, lacking other defence, set themselves to favour Sylla, and placing him at the head of their faction, entered on the civil wars; wherein, after much blood had been spilt, and after many changes of fortune, they got the better of their adversaries. But afterwards, in the time of Cæsar and Pompey, the distemper broke out afresh; for Cæsar heading the Marian party, and Pompey, that of Sylla, and war ensuing, the victory remained with Cæsar, who was the first tyrant in Rome; after whose time that city was never again free. Such, therefore, was the beginning and such the end of the Agrarian Law.

But since it has elsewhere been said that the struggle between the commons and senate of Rome preserved her liberties, as giving rise to laws favourable to freedom, it might seem that the consequences of the Agrarian Law are opposed to that view. I am not, however, led to alter my opinion on this account; for I maintain that the ambition of the great is so pernicious that unless controlled and counteracted in a variety of ways, it will always reduce a city to speedy ruin. So that if the controversy over the Agrarian Laws took three hundred years to bring Rome to slavery, she would in all likelihood have been brought to slavery in a far shorter time, had not the commons, by means of this law, and by other demands, constantly restrained the ambition of the nobles.

We may also learn from this contest how much more men value wealth than honours; for in the matter of honours, the Roman nobles always gave way to the commons without any extraordinary resistance; but when it came to

be a question of property, so stubborn were they in its defence, that the commons to effect their ends had to resort to those irregular methods which have been described above. Of which irregularities the prime movers were the Gracchi, whose motives are more to be commended than their measures; since to pass a law with stringent retrospective effect, in order to remove an abuse of long standing in a republic, is an unwise step, and one which, as I have already shown at length, can have no other result than to accelerate the mischief to which the abuse leads; whereas, if you temporize, either the abuse develops more slowly, or else, in course of time, and before it comes to a head, dies out of itself.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.--That weak Republics are irresolute and undecided; and that the course they may take depends more on Necessity than Choice.

A terrible pestilence breaking out in Rome seemed to the Equians and Volscians to offer a fit opportunity for crushing her. The two nations, therefore, assembling a great army, attacked the Latins and Hernicians and laid waste their country. Whereupon the Latins and Hernicians were forced to make their case known to the Romans, and to ask to be defended by them. The Romans, who were sorely afflicted by the pestilence, answered that they must look to their own defence, and with their own forces, since Rome was in no position to succour them.

Here we recognize the prudence and magnanimity of the Roman senate, and how at all times, and in all changes of fortune, they assumed the responsibility of determining the course their country should take; and were not ashamed, when necessary, to decide on a course contrary to that which was usual with them, or which they had decided to follow on some other occasion. I say this because on other occasions this same senate had forbidden these nations to defend themselves; and a less prudent assembly might have thought it lowered their credit to withdraw that prohibition. But the Roman senate always took a sound view of things, and always accepted the least hurtful course as the best. So that, although it was distasteful to them not to be able to defend their subjects, and equally distasteful--both for the reasons given, and for others which may be understood--that their subjects should take up arms in their absence, nevertheless knowing that these must have recourse to

arms in any case, since the enemy was upon them, they took an honourable course in deciding that what had to be done should be done with their leave, lest men driven to disobey by necessity should come afterwards to disobey from choice. And although this may seem the course which every republic ought reasonably to follow, nevertheless weak and badly-advised republics cannot make up their minds to follow it, not knowing how to do themselves honour in like extremities.

After Duke Valentino had taken Faenza and forced Bologna to yield to his terms, desiring to return to Rome through Tuscany, he sent one of his people to Florence to ask leave for himself and his army to pass. A council was held in Florence to consider how this request should be dealt with, but no one was favourable to the leave asked for being granted. Wherein the Roman method was not followed. For as the Duke had a very strong force with him, while the Florentines were so bare of troops that they could not have prevented his passage, it would have been far more for their credit that he should seem to pass with their consent, than that he should pass in spite of them; because, while discredit had to be incurred either way, they would have incurred less by acceding to his demand.

But of all courses the worst for a weak State is to be irresolute; for then whatever it does will seem to be done under compulsion, so that if by chance it should do anything well, this will be set down to necessity and not to prudence. Of this I shall cite two other instances happening in our own times, and in our own country. In the year 1500, King Louis

of France, after recovering Milan, being desirous to restore Pisa to the Florentines, so as to obtain payment from them of the fifty thousand ducats which they had promised him on the restitution being completed, sent troops to Pisa under M. Beaumont, in whom, though a Frenchman, the Florentines put much trust. Beaumont accordingly took up his position with his forces between Cascina and Pisa, to be in readiness to attack the town. After he had been there for some days making arrangements for the assault, envoys came to him from Pisa offering to surrender their city to the French if a promise were given in the king's name, not to hand it over to the Florentines until four months had run. This condition was absolutely rejected by the Florentines, and the siege being proceeded with, they were forced to retire with disgrace. Now the proposal of the Pisans was rejected by the Florentines for no other reason than that they distrusted the good faith of the King, into whose hands their weakness obliged them to commit themselves, and did not reflect how much more it was for their interest that, by obtaining entrance into Pisa, he should have it in his power to restore the town to them, or, failing to restore it, should at once disclose his designs, than that remaining outside he should put them off with promises for which they had to pay. It would therefore have been a far better course for the Florentines to have agreed to Beaumont taking possession on whatever terms.

This was seen afterwards by experience in the year 1502, when, on the revolt of Arezzo, M. Imbalt was sent by the King of France with French troops to assist the Florentines. For when he got near Arezzo, and began

to negotiate with the Aretines, who, like the Pisans, were willing to surrender their town on terms, the acceptance of these terms was strongly disapproved in Florence; which Imbalt learning, and thinking that the Florentines were acting with little sense, he took the entire settlement of conditions into his own hands, and, without consulting the Florentine commissioners, concluded an arrangement to his own satisfaction, in execution of which he entered Arezzo with his army. And he let the Florentines know that he thought them fools and ignorant of the ways of the world; since if they desired to have Arezzo, they could signify their wishes to the King, who would be much better able to give it them when he had his soldiers inside, than when he had them outside the town. Nevertheless, in Florence they never ceased to blame and abuse M. Imbalt, until at last they came to see that if Beaumont had acted in the same way, they would have got possession Of Pisa as well as of Arezzo.

Applying what has been said to the matter in hand, we find that irresolute republics, unless upon compulsion, never follow wise courses; for wherever there is room for doubt, their weakness will not suffer them to come to any resolve; so that unless their doubts be overcome by some superior force which impels them forward, they remain always in suspense.

CHAPTER XXXIX.--That often the same Accidents are seen to befall different Nations.

Any one comparing the present with the past will soon perceive that in all cities and in all nations there prevail the same desires and passions as always have prevailed; for which reason it should be an easy matter for him who carefully examines past events, to foresee those which are about to happen in any republic, and to apply such remedies as the ancients have used in like cases; or finding none which have been used by them, to strike out new ones, such as they might have used in similar circumstances. But these lessons being neglected or not understood by readers, or, if understood by them, being unknown to rulers, it follows that the same disorders are common to all times.

In the year 1494 the Republic of Florence, having lost a portion of its territories, including Pisa and other towns, was forced to make war against those who had taken possession of them, who being powerful, it followed that great sums were spent on these wars to little purpose. This large expenditure had to be met by heavy taxes which gave occasion to numberless complaints on the part of the people; and inasmuch as the war was conducted by a council of ten citizens, who were styled "the Ten of the War," the multitude began to regard these with displeasure, as though they were the cause of the war and of the consequent expenditure; and at last persuaded themselves that if they got rid of this magistracy there would be an end to the war. Wherefore when the magistracy of "the Ten" should have been renewed, the people did not renew it, but,

suffering it to lapse, entrusted their affairs to the "Signory." This course was most pernicious, since not only did it fail to put an end to the war, as the people expected it would, but by setting aside men who had conducted it with prudence, led to such mishaps that not Pisa only, but Arezzo also, and many other towns besides were lost to Florence. Whereupon, the people recognizing their mistake, and that the evil was in the disease and not in the physician, reinstated the magistracy of the Ten.

Similar dissatisfaction grew up in Rome against the consular authority. For the people seeing one war follow another, and that they were never allowed to rest, when they should have ascribed this to the ambition of neighbouring nations who desired their overthrow, ascribed it to the ambition of the nobles, who, as they believed, being unable to wreak their hatred against them within the city, where they were protected by the power of the tribunes, sought to lead them outside the city, where they were under the authority of the consuls, that they might crush them where they were without help. In which belief they thought it necessary either to get rid of the consuls altogether, or so to restrict their powers as to leave them no authority over the people, either in the city or out of it.

The first who attempted to pass a law to this effect was the tribune Terentillus, who proposed that a committee of five should be named to consider and regulate the power of the consuls. This roused the anger of the nobles, to whom it seemed that the greatness of their authority

was about to set for ever, and that no part would be left them in the administration of the republic. Such, however, was the obstinacy of the tribunes, that they succeeded in abolishing the consular title, nor were satisfied until, after other changes, it was resolved that, in room of consuls, tribunes should be appointed with consular powers; so much greater was their hatred of the name than of the thing. For a long time matters remained on this footing; till eventually, the commons, discovering their mistake, resumed the appointment of consuls in the same way as the Florentines reverted to "the Ten of the War."

CHAPTER XL.--Of the creation of the Decemvirate in Rome, and what therein is to be noted. Wherein among other Matters is shown how the same Causes may lead to the Safety or to the Ruin of a Commonwealth.

It being my desire to treat fully of those disorders which arose in Rome on the creation of the decemvirate, I think it not amiss first of all to relate what took place at the time of that creation, and then to discuss those circumstances attending it which seem most to deserve notice. These are numerous, and should be well considered, both by those who would maintain the liberties of a commonwealth and by those who would subvert them. For in the course of our inquiry it will be seen that many mistakes prejudicial to freedom were made by the senate and people, and that many were likewise made by Appius, the chief decemvir, prejudicial to that tyranny which it was his aim to establish in Rome.

After much controversy and wrangling between the commons and the nobles as to the framing of new laws by which the freedom of Rome might be better secured, Spurius Posthumius and two other citizens were, by general consent, despatched to Athens to procure copies of the laws which Solon had drawn up for the Athenians, to the end that these might serve as a groundwork for the laws of Rome. On their return, the next step was to depute certain persons to examine these laws and to draft the new code. For which purpose a commission consisting of ten members, among whom was Appius Claudius, a crafty and ambitious citizen, was appointed for a year; and that the commissioners in framing their laws might act without fear or favour, all the other magistracies, and in

particular the consulate and tribuneship, were suspended, and the appeal to the people discontinued; so that the decemvirs came to be absolute in Rome. Very soon the whole authority of the commissioners came to be centred in Appius, owing to the favour in which he was held by the commons. For although before he had been regarded as the cruel persecutor of the people, he now showed himself so conciliatory in his bearing that men wondered at the sudden change in his character and disposition.

This set of commissioners, then, behaved discreetly, being attended by no more than twelve lictors, walking in front of that decemvir whom the rest put forward as their chief; and though vested with absolute authority, yet when a Roman citizen had to be tried for murder, they cited him before the people and caused him to be judged by them. Their laws they wrote upon ten tables, but before signing them they exposed them publicly, that every one might read and consider them, and if any defect were discovered in them, it might be corrected before they were finally passed. At this juncture Appius caused it to be notified throughout the city that were two other tables added to these ten, the laws would be complete; hoping that under this belief the people would consent to continue the decemvirate for another year. This consent the people willingly gave, partly to prevent the consuls being reinstated, and partly because they thought they could hold their ground without the aid of the tribunes, who, as has already been said, were the judges in criminal cases.

On it being resolved to reappoint the decemvirate, all the nobles set to canvass for the office, Appius among the foremost; and such cordiality did he display towards the commons while seeking their votes, that the other candidates, "unable to persuade themselves that so much affability on the part of so proud a man was wholly disinterested," began to suspect him; but fearing to oppose him openly, sought to circumvent him, by putting him forward, though the youngest of them all, to declare to the people the names of the proposed decemvirs; thinking that he would not venture to name himself, that being an unusual course in Rome, and held discreditable. "But what they meant as a hindrance, he turned to account," by proposing, to the surprise and displeasure of the whole nobility, his own name first, and then nominating nine others on whose support he thought he could depend.

The new appointments, which were to last for a year, having been made, Appius soon let both commons and nobles know the mistake they had committed, for throwing off the mask, he allowed his innate arrogance to appear, and speedily infected his colleagues with the same spirit; who, to overawe the people and the senate, instead of twelve lictors, appointed one hundred and twenty. For a time their measures were directed against high and low alike; but presently they began to intrigue with the senate, and to attack the commons; and if any of the latter, on being harshly used by one decemvir, ventured to appeal to another, he was worse handled on the appeal than in the first instance. The commons, on discovering their error, began in their despair to turn their eyes towards the nobles, "and to look for a breeze of freedom

from that very quarter whence fearing slavery they had brought the republic to its present straits." To the nobles the sufferings of the commons were not displeasing, from the hope "that disgusted with the existing state of affairs, they too might come to desire the restoration of the consuls."

When the year for which the decemvirs were appointed at last came to an end, the two additional tables of the law were ready, but had not yet been published. This was made a pretext by them for prolonging their magistracy, which they took measures to retain by force, gathering round them for this purpose a retinue of young noblemen, whom they enriched with the goods of those citizens whom they had condemned. "Corrupted by which gifts, these youths came to prefer selfish licence to public freedom."

It happened that at this time the Sabines and Volscians began to stir up a war against Rome, and it was during the alarm thereby occasioned that the decemvirs were first made aware how weak was their position. For without the senate they could take no warlike measures, while by assembling the senate they seemed to put an end to their own authority. Nevertheless, being driven to it by necessity, they took this latter course. When the senate met, many of the senators, but particularly Valerius and Horatius, inveighed against the insolence of the decemvirs, whose power would forthwith have been cut short, had not the senate through jealousy of the commons declined to exercise their authority. For they thought that were the decemvirs to lay down office of their own

free will, tribunes might not be reappointed. Wherefore they decided for war, and sent forth the armies under command of certain of the decemvirs. But Appius remaining behind to govern the city, it so fell out that he became enamoured of Virginia, and that when he sought to lay violent hands upon her, Virginius, her father, to save her from dishonour, slew her. Thereupon followed tumults in Rome, and mutiny among the soldiers, who, making common cause with the rest of the plebeians, betook themselves to the Sacred Hill, and there remained until the decemvirs laid down their office; when tribunes and consuls being once more appointed, Rome was restored to her ancient freedom.

In these events we note, first of all, that the pernicious step of creating this tyranny in Rome was due to the same causes which commonly give rise to tyrannies in cities; namely, the excessive love of the people for liberty, and the passionate eagerness of the nobles to govern. For when they cannot agree to pass some measure favourable to freedom, one faction or the other sets itself to support some one man, and a tyranny at once springs up. Both parties in Rome consented to the creation of the decemvirs, and to their exercising unrestricted powers, from the desire which the one had to put an end to the consular name, and the other to abolish the authority of the tribunes. When, on the appointment of the decemvirate, it seemed to the commons that Appius had become favourable to their cause, and was ready to attack the nobles, they inclined to support him. But when a people is led to commit this error of lending its support to some one man, in order that he may attack those whom it holds in hatred, if he only be prudent he will

inevitably become the tyrant of that city. For he will wait until, with the support of the people, he can deal a fatal blow to the nobles, and will never set himself to oppress the people until the nobles have been rooted out. But when that time comes, the people, although they recognize their servitude, will have none to whom they can turn for help.

Had this method, which has been followed by all who have successfully established tyrannies in republics, been followed by Appius, his power would have been more stable and lasting; whereas, taking the directly opposite course, he could not have acted more unwisely than he did. For in his eagerness to grasp the tyranny, he made himself obnoxious to those who were in fact conferring it, and who could have maintained him in it; and he destroyed those who were his friends, while he sought friendship from those from whom he could not have it. For although it be the desire of the nobles to tyrannize, that section of them which finds itself outside the tyranny is always hostile to the tyrant, who can never succeed in gaining over the entire body of the nobles by reason of their greed and ambition; for no tyrant can ever have honours or wealth enough to satisfy them all.

In abandoning the people, therefore, and siding with the nobles, Appius committed a manifest mistake, as well for the reasons above given, as because to hold a thing by force, he who uses force must needs be stronger than he against whom it is used. Whence it happens that those tyrants who have the mass of the people for their friends and the nobles

for their enemies, are more secure than those who have the people for their enemies and the nobles for their friends; because in the former case their authority has the stronger support. For with such support a ruler can maintain himself by the internal strength of his State, as did Nabis, tyrant of Sparta, when attacked by the Romans and by the whole of Greece; for making sure work with the nobles, who were few in number, and having the people on his side, he was able with their assistance to defend himself; which he could not have done had they been against him. But in the case of a city, wherein the tyrant has few friends, its internal strength will not avail him for its defence, and he will have to seek aid from without in one of three shapes. For either he must hire foreign guards to defend his person; or he must arm the peasantry, so that they may play the part which ought to be played by the citizens; or he must league with powerful neighbours for his defence. He who follows these methods and observes them well, may contrive to save himself, though he has the people for his enemy. But Appius could not follow the plan of gaining over the peasantry, since in Rome they and the people were one. And what he might have done he knew not how to do, and so was ruined at the very outset.

In creating the decemvirate, therefore, both the senate and the people made grave mistakes. For although, as already explained, when speaking of the dictatorship, it is those magistrates who make themselves, and not those made by the votes of the people, that are hurtful to freedom; nevertheless the people, in creating magistrates ought to take such precautions as will make it difficult for these to become bad. But the

Romans when they ought to have set a check on the decemvirs in order to keep them good, dispensed with it, making them the sole magistrates of Rome, and setting aside all others; and this from the excessive desire of the senate to get rid of the tribunes, and of the commons to get rid of the consuls; by which objects both were so blinded as to fall into all the disorders which ensued. For, as King Ferrando was wont to say, men often behave like certain of the smaller birds, which are so intent on the prey to which nature incites them, that they discern not the eagle hovering overhead for their destruction.

In this Discourse then the mistakes made by the Roman people in their efforts to preserve their freedom and the mistakes made by Appius in his endeavour to obtain the tyranny, have, as I proposed at the outset, been plainly shown.

CHAPTER XLI.--That it is unwise to pass at a bound from leniency to severity, or to a haughty bearing from a humble.

Among the crafty devices used by Appius to aid him in maintaining his authority, this, of suddenly passing from one character to the other extreme, was of no small prejudice to him. For his fraud in pretending to the commons to be well disposed towards them, was happily contrived; as were also the means he took to bring about the reappointment of the decemvirate. Most skilful, too, was his audacity in nominating himself contrary to the expectation of the nobles, and in proposing colleagues on whom he could depend to carry out his ends. But, as I have said already, it was not happily contrived that, after doing all this, he should suddenly turn round, and from being the friend, reveal himself the enemy of the people; haughty instead of humane; cruel instead of kindly; and make this change so rapidly as to leave himself no shadow of excuse, but compel all to recognize the doubleness of his nature. For he who has once seemed good, should he afterwards choose, for his own ends, to become bad, ought to change by slow degrees, and as opportunity serves; so that before his altered nature strip him of old favour, he may have gained for himself an equal share of new, and thus his influence suffer no diminution. For otherwise, being at once unmasked and friendless, he is undone:

CHAPTER XLII.--How easily Men become corrupted.

In this matter of the decemvirate we may likewise note the ease wherewith men become corrupted, and how completely, although born good and well brought up, they change their nature. For we see how favourably disposed the youths whom Appius gathered round him became towards his tyranny, in return for the trifling benefits which they drew from it; and how Quintus Fabius, one of the second decemvirate and a most worthy man, blinded by a little ambition, and misled by the evil counsels of Appius, abandoning his fair fame, betook himself to most unworthy courses, and grew like his master.

Careful consideration of this should make those who frame laws for commonwealths and kingdoms more alive to the necessity of placing restraints on men's evil appetites, and depriving them of all hope of doing wrong with impunity.

CHAPTER XLIII.--That Men fighting in their own Cause make good and resolute Soldiers.

From what has been touched upon above, we are also led to remark how wide is the difference between an army which, having no ground for discontent, fights in its own cause, and one which, being discontented, fights to satisfy the ambition of others. For whereas the Romans were always victorious under the consuls, under the decemvirs they were always defeated. This helps us to understand why it is that mercenary troops are worthless; namely, that they have no incitement to keep them true to you beyond the pittance which you pay them, which neither is nor can be a sufficient motive for such fidelity and devotion as would make them willing to die in your behalf. But in those armies in which there exists not such an attachment towards him for whom they fight as makes them devoted to his cause, there never will be valour enough to withstand an enemy if only he be a little brave. And since such attachment and devotion cannot be looked for from any save your own subjects, you must, if you would preserve your dominions, or maintain your commonwealth or kingdom, arm the natives of your country; as we see to have been done by all those who have achieved great things in war.

Under the decemvirs the ancient valour of the Roman soldiers had in no degree abated; yet, because they were no longer animated by the same good will, they did not exert themselves as they were wont. But so soon as the decemvirate came to an end, and the soldiers began once more to fight as free men, the old spirit was reawakened, and, as a consequence,

their enterprises, according to former usage, were brought to a successful close.

CHAPTER XLIV.--That the Multitude is helpless without a Head: and that we should not with the same breath threaten and ask leave.

When Virginia died by her father's hand, the commons of Rome withdrew under arms to the Sacred Hill. Whereupon the senate sent messengers to demand by what sanction they had deserted their commanders and assembled there in arms. And in such reverence was the authority of the senate held, that the commons, lacking leaders, durst make no reply. "Not," says Titus Livius, "that they were at a loss what to answer, but because they had none to answer for them;" words which clearly show how helpless a thing is the multitude when without a head.

This defect was perceived by Virginius, at whose instance twenty military tribunes were appointed by the commons to be their spokesmen with the senate, and to negotiate terms; who, having asked that Valerius and Horatius might be sent to them, to whom their wishes would be made known, these declined to go until the decemvirs had laid down their office. When this was done, and Valerius and Horatius came to the hill where the commons were assembled, the latter demanded that tribunes of the people should be appointed; that in future there should be an appeal to the people from the magistrates of whatever degree; and that all the decemvirs should be given up to them to be burned alive. Valerius and Horatius approved the first two demands, but rejected the last as inhuman; telling the commons that "they were rushing into that very cruelty which they themselves had condemned in others;" and counselling them to say nothing about the decemvirs, but to be satisfied to regain

their own power and authority; since thus the way would be open to them for obtaining every redress.

Here we see plainly how foolish and unwise it is to ask a thing and with the same breath to say, "I desire this that I may inflict an injury." For we should never declare our intention beforehand, but watch for every opportunity to carry it out. So that it is enough to ask another for his weapons, without adding, "With these I purpose to destroy you;" for when once you have secured his weapons, you can use them afterwards as you please.

CHAPTER XLV.--That it is of evil example, especially in the Maker of a Law, not to observe the Law when made: and that daily to renew acts of injustice in a City is most hurtful to the Governor.

Terms having been adjusted, and the old order of things restored in Rome, Virginius cited Appius to defend himself before the people; and on his appearing attended by many of the nobles, ordered him to be led to prison. Whereupon Appius began to cry out and appeal to the people. But Virginius told him that he was unworthy to be allowed that appeal which he had himself done away with, or to have that people whom he had wronged for his protectors. Appius rejoined, that the people should not set at nought that right of appeal which they themselves had insisted on with so much zeal. Nevertheless, he was dragged to prison, and before the day of trial slew himself. Now, though the wicked life of Appius merited every punishment, still it was impolitic to violate the laws, more particularly a law which had only just been passed; for nothing, I think, is of worse example in a republic, than to make a law and not to keep it; and most of all, when he who breaks is he that made it.

After the year 1494, the city of Florence reformed its government with the help of the Friar Girolamo Savonarola, whose writings declare his learning, his wisdom, and the excellence of his heart. Among other ordinances for the safety of the citizens, he caused a law to be passed, allowing an appeal to the people from the sentences pronounced by "the Eight" and by the "Signory" in trials for State offences; a law he had long contended for, and carried at last with great difficulty. It so

happened that a very short time after it was passed, five citizens were condemned to death by the "Signory" for State offences, and that when they sought to appeal to the people they were not permitted to do so, and the law was violated. This, more than any other mischance, helped to lessen the credit of the Friar; since if his law of appeal was salutary, he should have caused it to be observed; if useless, he ought not to have promoted it. And his inconsistency was the more remarked, because in all the sermons which he preached after the law was broken, he never either blamed or excused the person who had broken it, as though unwilling to condemn, while unable to justify what suited his purposes. This, as betraying the ambitious and partial turn of his mind, took from his reputation and exposed him to much obloquy.

Another thing which greatly hurts a government is to keep alive bitter feelings in men's minds by often renewed attacks on individuals, as was done in Rome after the decemvirate was put an end to. For each of the decemvirs, and other citizens besides, were at different times accused and condemned, so that the greatest alarm was spread through the whole body of the nobles, who came to believe that these prosecutions would never cease until their entire order was exterminated. And this must have led to grave mischief had not Marcus Duilius the tribune provided against it, by an edict which forbade every one, for the period of a year, citing or accusing any Roman citizen, an ordinance which had the effect of reassuring the whole nobility. Here we see how hurtful it is for a prince or commonwealth to keep the minds of their subjects in constant alarm and suspense by continually renewed punishments and

violence. And, in truth, no course can be more pernicious. For men who are in fear for their safety will seize on every opportunity for securing themselves against the dangers which surround them, and will grow at once more daring, and less scrupulous in resorting to new courses. For these reasons we should either altogether avoid inflicting injury, or should inflict every injury at a stroke, and then seek to reassure men's minds and suffer them to settle down and rest.

CHAPTER XLVI.--That Men climb from one step of Ambition to another, seeking at first to escape Injury and then to injure others.

As the commons of Rome on recovering their freedom were restored to their former position--nay, to one still stronger since many new laws had been passed which confirmed and extended their authority,--it might reasonably have been hoped that Rome would for a time remain at rest. The event, however, showed the contrary, for from day to day there arose in that city new tumults and fresh dissensions. And since the causes which brought this about have been most judiciously set forth by Titus Livius, it seems to me much to the purpose to cite his own words when he says, that "whenever either the commons or the nobles were humble, the others grew haughty; so that if the commons kept within due bounds, the young nobles began to inflict injuries upon them, against which the tribunes, who were themselves made the objects of outrage, were little able to give redress; while the nobles on their part, although they could not close their eyes to the ill behaviour of their young men, were yet well pleased that if excesses were to be committed, they should be committed by their own faction, and not by the commons. Thus the desire to secure its own liberty prompted each faction to make itself strong enough to oppress the other. For this is the common course of things, that in seeking to escape cause for fear, men come to give others cause to be afraid by inflicting on them those wrongs from which they strive to relieve themselves; as though the choice lay between injuring and being injured."

Herein, among other things, we perceive in what ways commonwealths are overthrown, and how men climb from one ambition to another; and recognize the truth of those words which Sallust puts in the mouth of Cæsar, that "all ill actions have their origin in fair beginnings."

[1] For, as I have said already, the ambitious citizen in a commonwealth seeks at the outset to secure himself against injury, not only at the hands of private persons, but also of the magistrates; to effect which he endeavours to gain himself friends. These he obtains by means honourable in appearance, either by supplying them with money or protecting them against the powerful. And because such conduct seems praiseworthy, every one is readily deceived by it, and consequently no remedy is applied. Pursuing these methods without hindrance, this man presently comes to be so powerful that private citizens begin to fear him, and the magistrates to treat him with respect. But when he has advanced thus far on the road to power without encountering opposition, he has reached a point at which it is most dangerous to cope with him; it being dangerous, as I have before explained, to contend with a disorder which has already made progress in a city. Nevertheless, when he has brought things to this pass, you must either endeavour to crush him, at the risk of immediate ruin, or else, unless death or some like accident interpose, you incur inevitable slavery by letting him alone. For when, as I have said, it has come to this that the citizens and even the magistrates fear to offend him and his friends, little further effort will afterwards be needed to enable him to proscribe and ruin whom he pleases.

A republic ought, therefore, to provide by its ordinances that none of its citizens shall, under colour of doing good, have it in their power to do evil, but shall be suffered to acquire such influence only as may aid and not injure freedom. How this may be done, shall presently be explained.

[Footnote 1: Quod omnia mala exempla ex bonis initiis orta sunt. (Sall. Cat. 51.)]

CHAPTER XLVII.--That though Men deceive themselves in Generalities, in Particulars they judge truly.

The commons of Rome having, as I have said, grown disgusted with the consular name, and desiring either that men of plebeian birth should be admitted to the office or its authority be restricted, the nobles, to prevent its degradation in either of these two ways, proposed a middle course, whereby four tribunes, who might either be plebeians or nobles, were to be created with consular authority. This compromise satisfied the commons, who thought they would thus get rid of the consulship, and secure the highest offices of the State for their own order. But here a circumstance happened worth noting. When the four tribunes came to be chosen, the people, who had it in their power to choose all from the commons, chose all from the nobles. With respect to which election Titus Livius observes, that "the result showed that the people when declaring their honest judgment after controversy was over, were governed by a different spirit from that which had inspired them while contending for their liberties and for a share in public honours." The reason for this I believe to be, that men deceive themselves more readily in generals than in particulars. To the commons of Rome it seemed, in the abstract, that they had every right to be admitted to the consulship, since their party in the city was the more numerous, since they bore the greater share of danger in their wars, and since it was they who by their valour kept Rome free and made her powerful. And because it appeared to them, as I have said, that their desire was a reasonable one, they were resolved to satisfy it at all hazards. But when they had to form a

particular judgment on the men of their own party, they recognized their defects, and decided that individually no one of them was deserving of what, collectively, they seemed entitled to; and being ashamed of them, turned to bestow their honours on those who deserved them. Of which decision Titus Livius, speaking with due admiration, says, "Where shall we now find in any one man, that modesty, moderation, and magnanimity which were then common to the entire people?"

As confirming what I have said, I shall cite another noteworthy incident, which occurred in Capua after the rout of the Romans by Hannibal at Cannæ. For all Italy being convulsed by that defeat, Capua too was threatened with civil tumult, through the hatred which prevailed between her people and senate. But Pacuvius Calavius, who at this time filled the office of chief magistrate, perceiving the danger, took upon himself to reconcile the contending factions. With this object he assembled the Senate and pointed out to them the hatred in which they were held by the people, and the risk they ran of being put to death by them, and of the city, now that the Romans were in distress, being given up to Hannibal. But he added that, were they to consent to leave the matter with him, he thought he could contrive to reconcile them; in the meanwhile, however, he must shut them up in the palace, that, by putting it in the power of the people to punish them, he might secure their safety.

The senate consenting to this proposal, he shut them up in the palace, and summoning the people to a public meeting, told them the time had

at last come for them to trample on the insolence of the nobles, and requite the wrongs suffered at their hands; for he had them all safe under bolt and bar; but, as he supposed they did not wish the city to remain without rulers, it was fit, before putting the old senators to death, they should appoint others in their room. Wherefore he had thrown the names of all the old senators into a bag, and would now proceed to draw them out one by one, and as they were drawn would cause them to be put to death, so soon as a successor was found for each. When the first name he drew was declared, there arose a great uproar among the people, all crying out against the cruelty, pride, and arrogance of that senator whose name it was. But on Pacuvius desiring them to propose a substitute, the meeting was quieted, and after a brief pause one of the commons was nominated. No sooner, however, was his name mentioned than one began to whistle, another to laugh, some jeering at him in one way and some in another. And the same thing happening in every case, each and all of those nominated were judged unworthy of senatorial rank. Whereupon Pacuvius, profiting by the opportunity, said, "Since you are agreed that the city would be badly off without a senate, but are not agreed whom to appoint in the room of the old senators, it will, perhaps, be well for you to be reconciled to them; for the fear into which they have been thrown must have so subdued them, that you are sure to find in them that affability which hitherto you have looked for in vain." This proposal being agreed to, a reconciliation followed between the two orders; the commons having seen their error so soon as they were obliged to come to particulars.

A people therefore is apt to err in judging of things and their accidents in the abstract, but on becoming acquainted with particulars, speedily discovers its mistakes. In the year 1494, when her greatest citizens were banished from Florence, and no regular government any longer existed there, but a spirit of licence prevailed, and matters went continually from bad to worse, many Florentines perceiving the decay of their city, and discerning no other cause for it, blamed the ambition of this or the other powerful citizen, who, they thought, was fomenting these disorders with a view to establish a government to his own liking, and to rob them of their liberties. Those who thought thus, would hang about the arcades and public squares, maligning many citizens, and giving it to be understood that if ever they found themselves in the Signory, they would expose the designs of these citizens and have them punished. From time to time it happened that one or another of those who used this language rose to be of the chief magistracy, and so soon as he obtained this advancement, and saw things nearer, became aware whence the disorders I have spoken of really came, the dangers attending them, and the difficulty in dealing with them; and recognizing that they were the growth of the times, and not occasioned by particular men, suddenly altered his views and conduct; a nearer knowledge of facts freeing him from the false impressions he had been led into on a general view of affairs. But those who had heard him speak as a private citizen, when they saw him remain inactive after he was made a magistrate, believed that this arose not from his having obtained any better knowledge of things, but from his having been cajoled or corrupted by the great. And this happening with many men and often, it

came to be a proverb among the people, that "men had one mind in the market-place, another in the palace."

Reflecting on what has been said, we see how quickly men's eyes may be opened, if knowing that they deceive themselves in generalities, we can find a way to make them pass to particulars; as Pacuvius did in the case of the Capuans, and the senate in the case of Rome. Nor do I believe that any prudent man need shrink from the judgment of the people in questions relating to particulars, as, for instance, in the distribution of honours and dignities. For in such matters only, the people are either never mistaken, or at any rate far seldomer than a small number of persons would be, were the distribution entrusted to them.

It seems to me, however, not out of place to notice in the following Chapter, a method employed by the Roman senate to enlighten the people in making this distribution.

CHAPTER XLVIII.--He who would not have an Office bestowed on some worthless or wicked Person, should contrive that it be solicited by one who is utterly worthless and wicked, or else by one who is in the highest degree noble and good.

Whenever the senate saw a likelihood of the tribunes with consular powers being chosen exclusively from the commons, it took one or other of two ways,--either by causing the office to be solicited by the most distinguished among the citizens; or else, to confess the truth, by bribing some base and ignoble fellow to fasten himself on to those other plebeians of better quality who were seeking the office, and become a candidate conjointly with them. The latter device made the people ashamed to give, the former ashamed to refuse.

This confirms what I said in my last Chapter, as to the people deceiving themselves in generalities but not in particulars.

CHAPTER XLIX.--That if Cities which, like Rome, had their beginning in Freedom, have had difficulty in framing such Laws as would preserve their Freedom, Cities which at the first have been in Subjection will find this almost impossible.

How hard it is in founding a commonwealth to provide it with all the laws needed to maintain its freedom, is well seen from the history of the Roman Republic. For although ordinances were given it first by Romulus, then by Numa, afterwards by Tullus Hostilius and Servius, and lastly by the Ten created for the express purpose, nevertheless, in the actual government of Rome new needs were continually developed, to meet which, new ordinances had constantly to be devised; as in the creation of the censors, who were one of the chief means by which Rome was kept free during the whole period of her constitutional government. For as the censors became the arbiters of morals in Rome, it was very much owing to them that the progress of the Romans towards corruption was retarded. And though, at the first creation of the office, a mistake was doubtless made in fixing its term at five years, this was corrected not long after by the wisdom of the dictator Mamercus, who passed a law reducing it to eighteen months; a change which the censors then in office took in such ill part, that they deprived Mamercus of his rank as a senator. This step was much blamed both by the commons and the Fathers; still, as our History does not record that Mamercus obtained any redress, we must infer either that the Historian has omitted something, or that on this head the laws of Rome were defective; since it is never well that the laws of a commonwealth should suffer a citizen

to incur irremediable wrong because he promotes a measure favourable to freedom.

But returning to the matter under consideration, we have, in connection with the creation of this new office, to note, that if those cities which, as was the case with Rome, have had their beginning in freedom, and have by themselves maintained that freedom, have experienced great difficulty in framing good laws for the preservation of their liberties, it is little to be wondered at that cities which at the first were dependent, should find it not difficult merely but impossible so to shape their ordinances as to enable them to live free and undisturbed. This difficulty we see to have arisen in the case of Florence, which, being subject at first to the power of Rome and subsequently to that of other rulers, remained long in servitude, taking no thought for herself; and even afterwards, when she could breathe more freely and began to frame her own laws, these, since they were blended with ancient ordinances which were bad, could not themselves be good; and thus for the two hundred years of which we have trustworthy record, our city has gone on patching her institutions, without ever possessing a government in respect of which she could truly be termed a commonwealth.

The difficulties which have been felt in Florence are the same as have been felt in all cities which have had a like origin; and although, repeatedly, by the free and public votes of her citizens, ample authority has been given to a few of their number to reform her constitution, no alteration of general utility has ever been introduced,

but only such as forwarded the interests of the party to which those commissioned to make changes belonged. This, instead of order, has occasioned the greatest disorder in our city.

But to come to particulars, I say, that among other matters which have to be considered by the founder of a commonwealth, is the question into whose hands should be committed the power of life and death over its citizens' This was well seen to in Rome, where, as a rule, there was a right of appeal to the people, but where, on any urgent case arising in which it might have been dangerous to delay the execution of a judicial sentence, recourse could be had to a dictator with powers to execute justice at once; a remedy, however, never resorted to save in cases of extremity. But Florence, and other cities having a like origin, committed this power into the hands of a foreigner, whom they styled Captain, and as he was open to be corrupted by powerful citizens this was a pernicious course. Altering this arrangement afterwards in consequence of changes in their government, they appointed eight citizens to discharge the office of Captain. But this, for a reason already mentioned, namely that a few will always be governed by the will of a few and these the most powerful, was a change from bad to worse.

The city of Venice has guarded herself against a like danger. For in Venice ten citizens are appointed with power to punish any man without appeal; and because, although possessing the requisite authority, this number might not be sufficient to insure the punishment of the powerful, in addition to their council of Ten, they have also constituted a

council of Forty, and have further provided that the council of the "Pregai," which is their supreme council, shall have authority to chastise powerful offenders. So that, unless an accuser be wanting, a tribunal is never wanting in Venice to keep powerful citizens in check.

But when we see how in Rome, with ordinances of her own imposing, and with so many and so wise legislators, fresh occasion arose from day to day for framing new laws favourable to freedom, it is not to be wondered at that, in other cities less happy in their beginnings, difficulties should have sprung up which no ordinances could remedy.

CHAPTER L.--That neither any Council nor any Magistrate should have power to bring the Government of a City to a stay.

T.Q. CINCINNATUS and Cn. Julius Mento being consuls of Rome, and being at variance with one another, brought the whole business of the city to a stay; which the senate perceiving, were moved to create a dictator to do what, by reason of their differences, the consuls would not. But though opposed to one another in everything else, the consuls were of one mind in resisting the appointment of a dictator; so that the senate had no remedy left them but to seek the help of the tribunes, who, supported by their authority, forced the consuls to yield.

Here we have to note, first, the usefulness of the tribunes' authority in checking the ambitious designs, not only of the nobles against the commons, but also of one section of the nobles against another; and next, that in no city ought things ever to be so ordered that it rests with a few to decide on matters, which, if the ordinary business of the State is to proceed at all, must be carried out. Wherefore, if you grant authority to a council to distribute honours and offices, or to a magistrate to administer any branch of public business, you must either impose an obligation that the duty confided shall be performed, or ordain that, on failure to perform, another may and shall do what has to be done. Otherwise such an arrangement will be found defective and dangerous; as would have been the case in Rome, had it not been possible to oppose the authority of the tribunes to the obstinacy of the consuls.

In the Venetian Republic, the great council distributes honours and offices. But more than once it has happened that the council, whether from ill-humour or from being badly advised, has declined to appoint successors either to the magistrates of the city or to those administering the government abroad. This gave rise to the greatest confusion and disorder; for, on a sudden, both the city itself and the subject provinces found themselves deprived of their lawful governors; nor could any redress be had until the majority of the council were pacified or undeceived. And this disorder must have brought the city to a bad end, had not provision been made against its recurrence by certain of the wiser citizens, who, finding a fit opportunity, passed a law that no magistracy, whether within or without the city, should ever be deemed to have been vacated until it was filled up by the appointment of a successor. In this way the council was deprived of its facilities for stopping public business to the danger of the State.

CHAPTER LI.--What a Prince or Republic does of Necessity, should seem to be done by Choice.

In all their actions, even in those which are matters of necessity rather than choice, prudent men will endeavour so to conduct themselves as to conciliate good-will. This species of prudence was well exercised by the Roman senate when they resolved to grant pay from the public purse to soldiers on active service, who, before, had served at their own charges. For perceiving that under the old system they could maintain no war of any duration, and, consequently, could not undertake a siege or lead an army to any distance from home, and finding it necessary to be able to do both, they decided on granting the pay I have spoken of. But this, which they could not help doing, they did in such a way as to earn the thanks of the people, by whom the concession was so well received that all Rome was intoxicated with delight. For it seemed to them a boon beyond any they could have ventured to hope for, or have dreamed of demanding. And although the tribunes sought to make light of the benefit, by showing the people that their burthens would be increased rather than diminished by it, since taxes would have to be imposed out of which the soldier's stipend might be paid, they could not persuade them to regard the measure otherwise than with gratitude; which was further increased by the manner in which the senate distributed the taxes, imposing on the nobles all the heavier and greater, and those which had to be paid first.

CHAPTER LII.--That to check the arrogance of a Citizen who is growing too powerful in a State, there is no safer Method, or less open to objection, than to forestall him in those Ways whereby he seeks to advance himself.

It has been seen in the preceding chapter how much credit the nobles gained with the commons by a show of good-will towards them, not only in providing for their military pay, but also in adjusting taxation. Had the senate constantly adhered to methods like these, they would have put an end to all disturbances in Rome, and have deprived the tribunes of the credit they had with the people, and of the influence thence arising. For in truth, in a commonwealth, and especially in one which has become corrupted, there is no better, or easier, or less objectionable way of opposing the ambition of any citizen, than to anticipate him in those paths by which he is seen to be advancing to the ends he has in view. This plan, had it been followed by the enemies of Cosimo de' Medici, would have proved a far more useful course for them than to banish him from Florence; since if those citizens who opposed him had adopted his methods for gaining over the people, they would have succeeded, without violence or tumult, in taking his most effective weapon from his hands.

The influence acquired in Florence by Piero Soderini was entirely due to his skill in securing the affections of the people, since in this way he obtained among them a name for loving the liberties of the commonwealth. And truly, for those citizens who envied his greatness it would have

been both easier and more honourable, and at the same time far less dangerous and hurtful to the State, to forestall him in those measures by which he was growing powerful, than to oppose him in such a manner that his overthrow must bring with it the ruin of the entire republic. For had they, as they might easily have done, deprived him of the weapons which made him formidable, they could then have withstood him in all the councils, and in all public deliberations, without either being suspected or feared. And should any rejoin that, if the citizens who hated Piero Soderini committed an error in not being beforehand with him in those ways whereby he came to have influence with the people, Piero himself erred in like manner, in not anticipating his enemies in those methods whereby they grew formidable to him; I answer that Piero is to be excused, both because it would have been difficult for him to have so acted, and because for him such a course would not have been honourable. For the paths wherein his danger lay were those which favoured the Medici, and it was by these that his enemies attacked him, and in the end overthrew him. But these paths Piero could not pursue without dishonour, since he could not, if he was to preserve his fair fame, have joined in destroying that liberty which he had been put forward to defend. Moreover, since favours to the Medicean party could not have been rendered secretly and once for all, they would have been most dangerous for Piero, who, had he shown himself friendly to the Medici, must have become suspected and hated by the people; in which case his enemies would have had still better opportunities than before for his destruction.

Men ought therefore to look to the risks and dangers of any course which lies before them, nor engage in it when it is plain that the dangers outweigh the advantages, even though they be advised by others that it is the most expedient way to take. Should they act otherwise, it will fare with them as with Tullius, who, in seeking to diminish the power of Marcus Antonius, added to it. For Antonius, who had been declared an enemy by the senate, having got together a strong force, mostly made up of veterans who had shared the fortunes of Cæsar, Tullius counselled the senate to invest Octavianus with full authority, and to send him against Antonius with the consuls and the army; affirming, that so soon as those veterans who had served with Cæsar saw the face of him who was Cæsar's nephew and had assumed his name, they would rally to his side and desert Antonius, who might easily be crushed when thus left bare of support.

But the reverse of all this happened. For Antonius persuaded Octavianus to take part with him, and to throw over Tullius and the senate. And this brought about the ruin of the senate, a result which might easily have been foreseen. For remembering the influence of that great captain, who, after overthrowing all opponents, had seized on sovereign power in Rome, the senate should have turned a deaf ear to the persuasions of Tullius, nor ever have believed it possible that from Cæsar's heir, or from soldiers who had followed Cæsar, they could look for anything that consisted with the name of Freedom.

CHAPTER LIII.--That the People, deceived by a false show of Advantage, often desire what would be their Ruin; and that large Hopes and brave Promises easily move them.

When Veii fell, the commons of Rome took up the notion that it would be to the advantage of their city were half their number to go and dwell there. For they argued that as Veii lay in a fertile country and was a well-built city, a moiety of the Roman people might in this way be enriched; while, by reason of its vicinity to Rome, the management of civil affairs would in no degree be affected. To the senate, however, and the wiser among the citizens, the scheme appeared so rash and mischievous that they publicly declared they would die sooner than consent to it. The controversy continuing, the commons grew so inflamed against the senate that violence and bloodshed must have ensued; had not the senate for their protection put forward certain old and esteemed citizens, respect for whom restrained the populace and put a stop to their violence.

Two points are here to be noted. First, that a people deceived by a false show of advantage will often labour for its own destruction; and,

unless convinced by some one whom it trusts, that the course on which it is bent is pernicious, and that some other is to be preferred, will bring infinite danger and injury upon the State. And should it so happen, as sometimes is the case, that from having been deceived before, either by men or by events, there is none in whom the people trust,

their ruin is inevitable. As to which Dante, in his treatise "De Monarchia," observes that the people will often raise the cry, "Flourish our death and perish our life."[1] From which distrust it arises that often in republics the right course is not followed; as when Venice, as has been related, on being attacked by many enemies, could not, until her ruin was complete, resolve to make friends with any one of them by restoring those territories she had taken from them, on account of which war had been declared and a league of princes formed against her.

In considering what courses it is easy, and what it is difficult to persuade a people to follow, this distinction may be drawn: Either what you would persuade them to, presents on the face of it a semblance of gain or loss, or it seems a spirited course or a base one. When any proposal submitted to the people holds out promise of advantage, or seems to them a spirited course to take, though loss lie hid behind, nay, though the ruin of their country be involved in it, they will always be easily led to adopt it; whereas it will always be difficult to persuade the adoption of such courses as wear the appearance of disgrace or loss, even though safety and advantage be bound up with them. The truth of what I say is confirmed by numberless examples both Roman and foreign, modern and ancient. Hence grew the ill opinion entertained in Rome of Fabius Maximus, who could never persuade the people that it behoved them to proceed warily in their conflict with Hannibal, and withstand his onset without fighting. For this the people thought a base course, not discerning the advantage resulting from it, which Fabius

could by no argument make plain to them. And so blinded are men in favour of what seems a spirited course, that although the Romans had already committed the blunder of permitting Varro, master of the knights to Fabius, to join battle contrary to the latter's desire, whereby the army must have been destroyed had not Fabius by his prudence saved it, this lesson was not enough; for afterwards they appointed this Varro to be consul, for no other reason than that he gave out, in the streets and market-places, that he would make an end of Hannibal as soon as leave was given him to do so. Whence came the battle and defeat of Cannæ, and well-nigh the destruction of Rome.

Another example taken from Roman history may be cited to the same effect. After Hannibal had maintained himself for eight or ten years in Italy, during which time the whole country had been deluged with Roman blood, a certain Marcus Centenius Penula, a man of mean origin, but who had held some post in the army, came forward and proposed to the senate that were leave given him to raise a force of volunteers in any part of Italy he pleased, he would speedily deliver Hannibal into their hands, alive or dead. To the senate this man's offer seemed a rash one; but reflecting that were they to refuse it, and were the people afterwards to hear that it had been made, tumults, ill will, and resentment against them would result, they granted the permission asked; choosing rather to risk the lives of all who might follow Penula, than to excite fresh discontent on the part of the people, to whom they knew that such a proposal would be welcome, and that it would be very hard to dissuade them from it. And so this adventurer, marching forth with an

undisciplined and disorderly rabble to meet Hannibal, was, with all his followers, defeated and slain in the very first encounter.

In Greece, likewise, and in the city of Athens, that most grave and prudent statesman, Nicias, could not convince the people that the proposal to go and attack Sicily was disadvantageous; and the expedition being resolved on, contrary to his advice and to the wishes of the wiser among the citizens, resulted in the overthrow of the Athenian power. Scipio, on being appointed consul, asked that the province of Africa might be awarded to him, promising that he would utterly efface Carthage; and when the senate, on the advice of Fabius, refused his request, he threatened to submit the matter to the people as very well knowing that to the people such proposals are always acceptable.

I might cite other instances to the same effect from the history of our own city, as when Messer Ercole Bentivoglio and Antonio Giacomini, being in joint command of the Florentine armies, after defeating Bartolommeo d'Alviano at San Vincenzo, proceeded to invest Pisa. For this enterprise was resolved on by the people in consequence of the brave promises of Messer Ercole; and though many wise citizens disapproved of it, they could do nothing to prevent it, being carried away by the popular will, which took its rise in the assurances of their captain.

I say, then, that there is no readier way to bring about the ruin of a republic, when the power is in the hands of the people, than to suggest daring courses for their adoption. For wherever the people have a voice,

such proposals will always be well received, nor will those persons who are opposed to them be able to apply any remedy. And as this occasions the ruin of States, it likewise, and even more frequently, occasions the private ruin of those to whom the execution of these proposals is committed; because the people anticipating victory, do not when there comes defeat ascribe it to the short means or ill fortune of the commander, but to his cowardice and incapacity; and commonly either put him to death, or imprison or banish him; as was done in the case of numberless Carthaginian generals and of many Athenian, no successes they might previously have obtained availing them anything; for all past services are cancelled by a present loss. And so it happened with our Antonio Giacomini, who not succeeding as the people had expected, and as he had promised, in taking Pisa, fell into such discredit with the people, that notwithstanding his countless past services, his life was spared rather by the compassion of those in authority than through any movement of the citizens in his behalf.

[Footnote 1: "Viva la sua morte e muoia la sua vita." The quotation does not seem to be from the "De Monarchia."]

CHAPTER LIV.--Of the boundless Authority which a great Man may use to restrain an excited Multitude.

The next noteworthy point in the passage referred to in the foregoing Chapter is, that nothing tends so much to restrain an excited multitude as the reverence felt for some grave person, clothed with authority, who stands forward to oppose them. For not without reason has Virgil said--

"If then, by chance, some reverend chief appear,
Known for his deeds and for his virtues dear,
Silent they wait his words and bend a listening ear."[1]

He therefore who commands an army or governs a city wherein tumult shall have broken out, ought to assume the noblest and bravest bearing he can, and clothe himself with all the ensigns of his station, that he may make himself more revered. It is not many years since Florence was divided into two factions, the Frateschi and Arrabbiati, as they were named, and these coming to open violence, the Frateschi, among whom was Pagolo Antonio Soderini, a citizen of great reputation in these days, were worsted. In the course of these disturbances the people coming with arms in their hands to plunder the house of Soderini, his brother Messer Francesco, then bishop of Volterra and now cardinal, who happened to be dwelling there, so soon as he heard the uproar and saw the crowd, putting on his best apparel and over it his episcopal robes, went forth to meet the armed multitude, and by his words and mien brought them to a stay; and for many days his behaviour was commended by the whole

city. The inference from all which is, that there is no surer or more necessary restraint on the violence of an unruly multitude, than the presence of some one whose character and bearing command respect.

But to return once more to the passage we are considering, we see how stubbornly the people clung to this scheme of transplanting themselves to Veii, thinking it for their advantage, and not discerning the mischief really involved in it; so that in addition to the many dissensions which it occasioned, actual violence must have followed, had not the senate with the aid of certain grave and reverend citizens repressed the popular fury.

[Footnote 1: Tum pietate gravem ac meritis si forte virum quem
Conspexere, silent, arrectisque auribus adstant.
Virg. Aen., I. 154.]

CHAPTER LV.--That Government is easily carried on in a City wherein the body of the People is not corrupted: and that a Princedom is impossible where Equality prevails, and a Republic where it does not.

Though what we have to fear or hope from cities that have grown corrupted has already been discussed, still I think it not out of place to notice a resolution passed by the senate touching the vow which Camillus made to Apollo of a tenth of the spoil taken from the Veientines. For this spoil having fallen into the hands of the people, the senate, being unable by other means to get any account of it, passed an edict that every man should publicly offer one tenth part of what he had taken. And although this edict was not carried out, from the senate having afterwards followed a different course, whereby, to the content of the people, the claim of Apollo was otherwise satisfied, we nevertheless see from their having entertained such a proposal, how completely the senate trusted to the honesty of the people, when they assumed that no one would withhold any part of what the edict commanded him to give; on the other hand, we see that it never occurred to the people that they might evade the law by giving less than was due, their only thought being to free themselves from the law by openly manifesting their displeasure. This example, together with many others already noticed, shows how much virtue and how profound a feeling of religion prevailed among the Roman people, and how much good was to be expected from them. And, in truth, in the country where virtue like this does not exist, no good can be looked for, as we should look for it in vain in provinces which at the present day are seen to be corrupted; as Italy

is beyond all others, though, in some degree, France and Spain are similarly tainted. In which last two countries, if we see not so many disorders spring up as we see daily springing up in Italy, this is not so much due to the superior virtue of their inhabitants (who, to say truth, fall far short of our countrymen), as to their being governed by a king who keeps them united, not merely by his personal qualities, but also by the laws and ordinances of the realm which are still maintained with vigour. In Germany, however, we do see signal excellence and a devout religious spirit prevail among the people, giving rise to the many free States which there maintain themselves, with such strict observance of their laws that none, either within or without their walls, dare encroach on them.

That among this last-named people a great share of the ancient excellence does in truth still flourish, I shall show by an example similar to that which I have above related of the senate and people of Rome. It is customary with the German Free States when they have to expend any large sum of money on the public account, for their magistrates or councils having authority given them in that behalf, to impose a rate of one or two in the hundred on every man's estate; which rate being fixed, every man, in conformity with the laws of the city, presents himself before the collectors of the impost, and having first made oath to pay the amount justly due, throws into a chest provided for the purpose what he conscientiously believes it fair for him to pay, of which payment none is witness save himself. From this fact it may be gathered what honesty and religion still prevail among this people. For

we must assume that each pays his just share, since otherwise the impost would not yield the sum which, with reference to former imposts, it was estimated to yield; whereby the fraud would be detected, and thereupon some other method for raising money have to be resorted to.

At the present time this virtue is the more to be admired, because it seems to have survived in this province only. That it has survived there may be ascribed to two circumstances: first, that the natives have little communication with their neighbours, neither visiting them in their countries nor being visited by them; being content to use such commodities, and subsist on such food, and to wear garments of such materials as their own land supplies; so that all occasion for intercourse, and every cause of corruption is removed. For living after this fashion, they have not learned the manners of the French, the Italians, or the Spaniards, which three nations together are the corruption of the world. The second cause is, that these republics in which a free and pure government is maintained will not suffer any of their citizens either to be, or to live as gentlemen; but on the contrary, while preserving a strict equality among themselves, are bitterly hostile to all those gentlemen and lords who dwell in their neighbourhood; so that if by chance any of these fall into their hands, they put them to death, as the chief promoters of corruption and the origin of all disorders.

But to make plain what I mean when I speak of gentlemen, I say that those are so to be styled who live in opulence and idleness on the

revenues of their estates, without concerning themselves with the cultivation of these estates, or incurring any other fatigue for their support. Such persons are very mischievous in every republic or country. But even more mischievous are they who, besides the estates I have spoken of, are lords of strongholds and castles, and have vassals and retainers who render them obedience. Of these two classes of men the kingdom of Naples, the country round Rome, Romagna, and Lombardy are full; and hence it happens that in these provinces no commonwealth or free form of government has ever existed; because men of this sort are the sworn foes to all free institutions.

And since to plant a commonwealth in provinces which are in this condition were impossible, if these are to be reformed at all, it can only be by some one man who is able there to establish a kingdom; the reason being that when the body of the people is grown so corrupted that the laws are powerless to control it, there must in addition to the laws be introduced a stronger force, to wit, the regal, which by its absolute and unrestricted authority may curb the excessive ambition and corruption of the great. This opinion may be supported by the example of Tuscany, in which within a narrow compass of territory there have long existed the three republics of Florence, Lucca, and Siena, while the other cities of that province, although to a certain extent dependent, still show by their spirit and by their institutions that they preserve, or at any rate desire to preserve, their freedom: and this because there are in Tuscany no lords possessed of strongholds, and few or no gentlemen, but so complete an equality prevails, that a prudent

statesman, well acquainted with the history of the free States of antiquity, might easily introduce free institutions. Such, however, has been the unhappiness of this our country, that, up to the present hour, it has never produced any man with the power and knowledge which would have enabled him to act in this way.

From what has been said, it follows, that he who would found a commonwealth in a country wherein there are many gentlemen, cannot do so unless he first gets rid of them; and that he who would found a monarchy or princedom in a country wherein great equality prevails, will never succeed, unless he raise above the level of that equality many persons of a restless and ambitious temperament, whom he must make gentlemen not in name merely but in reality, by conferring on them castles and lands, supplying them with riches, and providing them with retainers; that with these gentlemen around him, and with their help, he may maintain his power, while they through him may gratify their ambition; all others being constrained to endure a yoke, which force and force alone imposes on them. For when in this way there comes to be a proportion between him who uses force and him against whom it is used, each stands fixed in his own station.

But to found a commonwealth in a country suited for a kingdom, or a kingdom in a country suited to be a commonwealth, requires so rare a combination of intelligence and power, that though many engage in the attempt, few are found to succeed. For the greatness of the undertaking quickly daunts them, and so obstructs their advance they break down at

the very outset. The case of the Venetian Republic, wherein none save gentlemen are permitted to hold any public office, does, doubtless, seem opposed to this opinion of mine that where there are gentlemen it is impossible to found a commonwealth. But it may be answered that the case of Venice is not in truth an instance to the contrary; since the gentlemen of Venice are gentlemen rather in name than in reality, inasmuch as they draw no great revenues from lands, their wealth consisting chiefly in merchandise and chattels, and not one of them possessing a castle or enjoying any feudal authority. For in Venice this name of gentleman is a title of honour and dignity, and does not depend on any of those circumstances in respect of which the name is given in other States. But as in other States the different ranks and classes are divided under different names, so in Venice we have the division into gentlemen (gentiluomini) and plebeians (popolani), it being understood that the former hold, or have the right to hold all situations of honour, from which the latter are entirely excluded. And in Venice this occasions no disturbance, for reasons which I have already explained.

Let a commonwealth, then, be constituted in the country where a great equality is found or has been made; and, conversely, let a princedom be constituted where great inequality prevails. Otherwise what is constituted will be discordant in itself, and without stability.

CHAPTER LVI.--That when great Calamities are about to befall a City or Country, Signs are seen to presage, and Seers arise who foretell them.

Whence it happens I know not, but it is seen from examples both ancient and recent, that no grave calamity has ever befallen any city or country which has not been foretold by vision, by augury, by portent, or by some other Heaven-sent sign. And not to travel too far afield for evidence of this, every one knows that long before the invasion of Italy by Charles VIII. of France, his coming was foretold by the friar Girolamo Savonarola; and how, throughout the whole of Tuscany, the rumour ran that over Arezzo horsemen had been seen fighting in the air. And who is there who has not heard that before the death of the elder Lorenzo de' Medici, the highest pinnacle of the cathedral was rent by a thunderbolt, to the great injury of the building? Or who, again, but knows that shortly before Piero Soderini, whom the people of Florence had made gonfalonier for life, was deprived of his office and banished, the palace itself was struck by lightning?

Other instances might be cited, which, not to be tedious, I shall omit, and mention only a circumstance which Titus Livius tells us preceded the invasion of the Gauls. For he relates how a certain plebeian named Marcus Ceditius reported to the senate that as he passed by night along the Via Nova, he heard a voice louder than mortal, bidding him warn the magistrates that the Gauls were on their way to Rome.

The causes of such manifestations ought, I think, to be inquired into

and explained by some one who has a knowledge, which I have not, of causes natural and supernatural. It may, however, be, as certain wise men say, that the air is filled with intelligent beings, to whom it is given to forecast future events; who, taking pity upon men, warn them beforehand by these signs to prepare for what awaits them. Be this as it may, certain it is that such warnings are given, and that always after them new and strange disasters befall nations.

CHAPTER LVII.--That the People are strong collectively, but individually weak.

After the ruin brought on their country by the invasion of the Gauls, many of the Romans went to dwell in Veii, in opposition to the edicts and commands of the senate, who, to correct this mischief, publicly ordained that within a time fixed, and under penalties stated, all should return to live in Rome. The persons against whom these proclamations were directed at first derided them; but, when the time came for them to be obeyed, all obeyed them. And Titus Livius observes that, "although bold enough collectively, each separately, fearing to be punished, made his submission." And indeed the temper of the multitude in such cases, cannot be better described than in this passage. For often a people will be open-mouthed in condemning the decrees of their prince, but afterwards, when they have to look punishment in the face, putting no trust in one another, they hasten to comply. Wherefore, if you be in a position to keep the people well-disposed towards you when they already are so, or to prevent them injuring you in case they be ill-disposed, it is clearly of little moment whether the feelings with which they profess to regard you, be favourable or no. This applies to all unfriendliness on the part of a people, whencesoever it proceed, excepting only the resentment felt by them on being deprived either of liberty, or of a prince whom they love and who still survives. For the hostile temper produced by these two causes is more to be feared than any beside, and demands measures of extreme severity to correct it. The other untoward humours of the

multitude, should there be no powerful chief to foster them, are easily dealt with; because, while on the one hand there is nothing more terrible than an uncontrolled and headless mob, on the other, there is nothing feebler. For though it be furnished with arms it is easily subdued, if you have some place of strength wherein to shelter from its first onset. For when its first fury has somewhat abated, and each man sees that he has to return to his own house, all begin to lose heart and to take thought how to insure their personal safety, whether by flight or by submission. For which reason a multitude stirred in this way, if it would avoid dangers such as I speak of, must at once appoint a head from among its own numbers, who may control it, keep it united, and provide for its defence; as did the commons of Rome when, after the death of Virginia, they quitted the city, and for their protection created twenty tribunes from among themselves. Unless this be done, what Titus Livius has observed in the passage cited, will always prove true, namely, that a multitude is strong while it holds together, but so soon as each of those who compose it begins to think of his own private danger, it becomes weak and contemptible.

CHAPTER LVIII.--That a People is wiser and more constant than a Prince

That "nothing is more fickle and inconstant than the multitude" is affirmed not by Titus Livius only, but by all other historians, in whose chronicles of human actions we often find the multitude condemning some citizen to death, and afterwards lamenting him and grieving greatly for his loss, as the Romans grieved and lamented for Manlius Capitolinus, whom they had themselves condemned to die. In relating which circumstance our author observes "In a short time the people, having no longer cause to fear him, began to deplore his death" And elsewhere, when speaking of what took place in Syracuse after the murder of Hieronymus, grandson of Hiero, he says, "It is the nature of the multitude to be an abject slave, or a domineering master"

It may be that in attempting to defend a cause, which, as I have said, all writers are agreed to condemn, I take upon me a task so hard and difficult that I shall either have to relinquish it with shame or pursue it with opprobrium. Be that as it may, I neither do, nor ever shall judge it a fault, to support opinion by arguments, where it is not sought to impose them by violence or authority I maintain, then, that this infirmity with which historians tax the multitude, may with equal reason be charged against every individual man, but most of all against princes, since all who are not controlled by the laws, will commit the very same faults as are committed by an uncontrolled multitude. Proof whereof were easy, since of all the many princes existing, or who have existed, few indeed are or have been either wise or good.

I speak of such princes as have had it in their power to break the reins by which they are controlled, among whom I do not reckon those kings who reigned in Egypt in the most remote antiquity when that country was governed in conformity with its laws; nor do I include those kings who reigned in Sparta, nor those who in our own times reign in France, which kingdom, more than any other whereof we have knowledge at the present day, is under the government of its laws. For kings who live, as these do, subject to constitutional restraint, are not to be counted when we have to consider each man's proper nature, and to see whether he resembles the multitude. For to draw a comparison with such princes as these, we must take the case of a multitude controlled as they are, and regulated by the laws, when we shall find it to possess the same virtues which we see in them, and neither conducting itself as an abject slave nor as a domineering master.

Such was the people of Rome, who, while the commonwealth continued uncorrupted, never either served abjectly nor domineered haughtily; but, on the contrary, by means of their magistrates and their ordinances, maintained their place, and when forced to put forth their strength against some powerful citizen, as in the case of Manlius, the decemvirs, and others who sought to oppress them, did so; but when it was necessary for the public welfare to yield obedience to the dictator or consuls, obeyed. And if the Roman people mourned the loss of the dead Manlius, it is no wonder; for they mourned his virtues, which had been of such a sort that their memory stirred the regret of all, and would have had

power to produce the same feelings even in a prince; all writers being agreed that excellence is praised and admired even by its enemies. But if Manlius when he was so greatly mourned, could have risen once more from the dead, the Roman people would have pronounced the same sentence against him which they pronounced when they led him forth from the prison-house, and straightway condemned him to die. And in like manner we see that princes, accounted wise, have put men to death, and afterwards greatly lamented them, as Alexander mourned for Clitus and others of his friends, and Herod for Mariamne.

But what our historian says of the multitude, he says not of a multitude which like the people of Rome is controlled by the laws, but of an uncontrolled multitude like the Syracusans, who were guilty of all these crimes which infuriated and ungoverned men commit, and which were equally committed by Alexander and Herod in the cases mentioned. Wherefore the nature of a multitude is no more to be blamed than the nature of princes, since both equally err when they can do so without regard to consequences. Of which many instances, besides those already given, might be cited from the history of the Roman emperors, and of other princes and tyrants, in whose lives we find such inconstancy and fickleness, as we might look in vain for in a people.

I maintain, therefore, contrary to the common opinion which avers that a people when they have the management of affairs are changeable, fickle, and ungrateful, that these faults exist not in them otherwise than as they exist in individual princes; so that were any to accuse both

princes and peoples, the charge might be true, but that to make exception in favour of princes is a mistake; for a people in command, if it be duly restrained, will have the same prudence and the same gratitude as a prince has, or even more, however wise he may be reckoned; and a prince on the other hand, if freed from the control of the laws, will be more ungrateful, fickle, and short-sighted than a people. And further, I say that any difference in their methods of acting results not from any difference in their nature, that being the same in both, or, if there be advantage on either side, the advantage resting with the people, but from their having more or less respect for the laws under which each lives. And whosoever attentively considers the history of the Roman people, may see that for four hundred years they never relaxed in their hatred of the regal name, and were constantly devoted to the glory and welfare of their country, and will find numberless proofs given by them of their consistency in both particulars. And should any allege against me the ingratitude they showed to Scipio, I reply by what has already been said at length on that head, where I proved that peoples are less ungrateful than princes. But as for prudence and stability of purpose, I affirm that a people is more prudent, more stable, and of better judgment than a prince. Nor is it without reason that the voice of the people has been likened to the voice of God; for we see that wide-spread beliefs fulfil themselves, and bring about marvellous results, so as to have the appearance of presaging by some occult quality either weal or woe. Again, as to the justice of their opinions on public affairs, seldom find that after hearing two speakers of equal ability urging them in opposite

directions, they do not adopt the sounder view, or are unable to decide on the truth of what they hear. And if, as I have said, a people errs in adopting courses which appear to it bold and advantageous, princes will likewise err when their passions are touched, as is far oftener the case with them than with a people.

We see, too, that in the choice of magistrates a people will choose far more honestly than a prince; so that while you shall never persuade a people that it is advantageous to confer dignities on the infamous and profligate, a prince may readily, and in a thousand ways, be drawn to do so. Again, it may be seen that a people, when once they have come to hold a thing in abhorrence, remain for many ages of the same mind; which we do not find happen with princes. For the truth of both of which assertions the Roman people are my sufficient witness, who, in the course of so many hundred years, and in so many elections of consuls and tribunes, never made four appointments of which they had reason to repent; and, as I have said, so detested the name of king, that no obligation they might be under to any citizen who affected that name, could shield him from the appointed penalty.

Further, we find that those cities wherein the government is in the hands of the people, in a very short space of time, make marvellous progress, far exceeding that made by cities which have been always ruled by princes; as Rome grew after the expulsion of her kings, and Athens after she freed herself from Pisistratus; and this we can ascribe to no other cause than that the rule of a people is better than the rule of a

prince.

Nor would I have it thought that anything our historian may have affirmed in the passage cited, or elsewhere, controverts these my opinions. For if all the glories and all the defects both of peoples and of princes be carefully weighed, it will appear that both for goodness and for glory a people is to be preferred. And if princes surpass peoples in the work of legislation, in shaping civil institutions, in moulding statutes, and framing new ordinances, so far do the latter surpass the former in maintaining what has once been established, as to merit no less praise than they.

And to state the sum of the whole matter shortly, I say that popular governments have endured for long periods in the same way as the governments of princes, and that both have need to be regulated by the laws; because the prince who can do what he pleases is a madman, and the people which can do as it pleases is never wise. If, then, we assume the case of a prince bound, and of a people chained down by the laws, greater virtue will appear in the people than in the prince; while if we assume the case of each of them freed from all control, it will be seen that the people commits fewer errors than the prince, and less serious errors, and such as admit of readier cure. For a turbulent and unruly people may be spoken to by a good man, and readily brought back to good ways; but none can speak to a wicked prince, nor any remedy be found against him but by the sword. And from this we may infer which of the two suffers from the worse disease; for if the disease of the people may

be healed by words, while that of the prince must be dealt with by the sword, there is none but will judge that evil to be the greater which demands the more violent remedy.

When a people is absolutely uncontrolled, it is not so much the follies which it commits or the evil which it actually does that excites alarm, as the mischief which may thence result, since in such disorders it becomes possible for a tyrant to spring up. But with a wicked prince the contrary is the case; for we dread present ill, and place our hopes in the future, persuading ourselves that the evil life of the prince may bring about our freedom. So that there is this distinction between the two, that with the one we fear what is, with the other what is likely to be. Again, the cruelties of a people are turned against him who it fears will encroach upon the common rights, but the cruelties of the prince against those who he fears may assert those rights.

The prejudice which is entertained against the people arises from this, that any man may speak ill of them openly and fearlessly, even when the government is in their hands; whereas princes are always spoken of with a thousand reserves and a constant eye to consequences.

But since the subject suggests it, it seems to me not out of place to consider what alliances we can most trust, whether those made with commonwealths or those made with princes.

CHAPTER LIX.--To what Leagues or Alliances we may most trust; whether those we make with Commonwealths or those we make with Princes.

Since leagues and alliances are every day entered into by one prince with another, or by one commonwealth with another, and as conventions and treaties are concluded in like manner between princes and commonwealths, it seems to me proper to inquire whether the faith of a commonwealth or that of a prince is the more stable and the safer to count on. All things considered, I am disposed to believe that in most cases they are alike, though in some they differ. Of one thing, however, I am convinced, namely, that engagements made under duress will never be observed either by prince or by commonwealth; and that if menaced with the loss of their territories, both the one and the other will break faith with you and treat you with ingratitude. Demetrius, who was named the "City-taker," had conferred numberless benefits upon the Athenians; but when, afterwards, on being defeated by his enemies, he sought shelter in Athens, as being a friendly city and under obligations to him, it was refused him; a circumstance which grieved him far more than the loss of his soldiers and army had done. Pompey, in like manner, when routed by Cæsar in Thessaly, fled for refuge to Ptolemy in Egypt, who formerly had been restored by him to his kingdom; by whom he was put to death. In both these instances the same causes were at work, although the inhumanity and the wrong inflicted were less in the case of the commonwealth than of the prince. Still, wherever there is fear, the want of faith will be the same.

And even if there be found a commonwealth or prince who, in order to keep faith, will submit to be ruined, this is seen to result from a like cause. For, as to the prince, it may easily happen that he is friend to a powerful sovereign, whom, though he be at the time without means to defend him, he may presently hope to see restored to his dominions; or it may be that having linked his fortunes with another's, he despairs of finding either faith or friendship from the enemies of his ally, as was the case with those Neapolitan princes who espoused the interests of France. As to commonwealths, an instance similar to that of the princes last named, is that of Saguntum in Spain, which awaited ruin in adhering to the fortunes of Rome. A like course was also followed by Florence when, in the year 1512, she stood steadfastly by the cause of the French. And taking everything into account, I believe that in cases of urgency, we shall find a certain degree of stability sooner in commonwealths than in princes. For though commonwealths be like-minded with princes, and influenced by the same passions, the circumstance that their movements must be slower, makes it harder for them to resolve than it is for a prince, for which reason they will be less ready to break faith.

And since leagues and alliances are broken for the sake of certain advantages, in this respect also, commonwealths observe their engagements far more faithfully than princes; for abundant examples might be cited of a very slight advantage having caused a prince to break faith, and of a very great advantage having failed to induce a commonwealth to do so. Of this we have an instance in the proposal made

to the Athenians by Themistocles, when he told them at a public meeting that he had certain advice to offer which would prove of great advantage to their city, but the nature of which he could not disclose to them, lest it should become generally known, when the opportunity for acting upon it would be lost. Whereupon the Athenians named Aristides to receive his communication, and to act upon it as he thought fit. To him, accordingly, Themistocles showed how the navy of united Greece, for the safety of which the Athenians stood pledged, was so situated that they might either gain it over or destroy it, and thus make themselves absolute masters of the whole country. Aristides reporting to the Athenians that the course proposed by Themistocles was extremely advantageous but extremely dishonourable, the people utterly refused to entertain it. But Philip of Macedon would not have so acted, nor any of those other princes who have sought and found more profit in breaking faith than in any other way.

As to engagements broken off on the pretext that they have not been observed by the other side, I say nothing, since that is a matter of everyday occurrence, and I am speaking here only of those engagements which are broken off on extraordinary grounds; but in this respect, likewise, I believe that commonwealths offend less than princes, and are therefore more to be trusted.

CHAPTER LX.--That the Consulship and all the other Magistracies in Rome were given without respect to Age.

It is seen in the course of the Roman history that, after the consulship was thrown open to the commons, the republic conceded this dignity to all its citizens, without distinction either of age or blood; nay, that in this matter respect for age was never made a ground for preference among the Romans, whose constant aim it was to discover excellence whether existing in old or young. To this we have the testimony of Valerius Corvinus, himself made consul in his twenty-fourth year, who, in addressing his soldiers, said of the consulship that it was "the reward not of birth but of desert."

Whether the course thus followed by the Romans was well judged or not, is a question on which much might be said. The concession as to blood, however, was made under necessity, and as I have observed on another occasion, the same necessity which obtained in Rome, will be found to obtain in every other city which desires to achieve the results which Rome achieved. For you cannot subject men to hardships unless you hold out rewards, nor can you without danger deprive them of those rewards whereof you have held out hopes. It was consequently necessary to extend, betimes, to the commons the hope of obtaining the consulship, on which hope they fed themselves for a while, without actually realizing it. But afterwards the hope alone was not enough, and it had to be satisfied. For while cities which do not employ men of plebeian birth in any of those undertakings wherein glory is to be gained, as we have seen

was the case with Venice, may treat these men as they please, those other cities which desire to do as Rome did, cannot make this distinction. And if there is to be no distinction in respect of blood, nothing can be pleaded for a distinction in respect of age. On the contrary, that distinction must of necessity cease to be observed. For where a young man is appointed to a post which requires the prudence which are is supposed to bring, it must be, since the choice rests with the people, that he is thus advanced in consideration of some noble action which he has performed; but when a young man is of such excellence as to have made a name for himself by some signal achievement, it were much to the detriment of his city were it unable at once to make use of him, but had to wait until he had grown old, and had lost, with youth, that alacrity and vigour by which his country might have profited; as Rome profited by the services of Valerius Corvinus, of Scipio, of Pompey, and of many others who triumphed while yet very young.