Machiavelli, Volume I,

By

Niccolò

VOLUME I

THE ART OF WAR

TRANSLATED BY

PETER WHITEHORNE

1560

THE PRINCE

TRANSLATED BY

EDWARD DACRES

1640

TO MY FRIEND

CHARLES WHIBLEY

H.C.

INTRODUCTION

'I am at my farm; and, since my last misfortunes, have not been in Florence twenty days. I spent September in snaring thrushes; but at the end of the month, even this rather tiresome sport failed me. I rise with the sun, and go into a wood of mine that is being cut, where I remain two hours inspecting the work of the previous day and conversing with the woodcutters, who have always some trouble on hand amongst themselves or with their neighbours. When I leave the wood, I go to a spring, and thence to the place which I use for snaring birds, with a book under my arm--Dante or Petrarch, or one of the minor poets, like Tibullus or Ovid. I read the story of their passions, and let their loves remind me of my own, which is a pleasant pastime for a while. Next I take the road, enter the inn door, talk with the passers-by, inquire the news of the neighbourhood, listen to a variety of matters, and make note of the different tastes and humours of men.

'This brings me to dinner-time, when I join my family and eat the poor produce of my farm. After dinner I go back to the inn, where I generally find the host and a butcher, a miller, and a pair of bakers. With these companions I play the fool all day at cards or backgammon: a thousand squabbles, a thousand insults and abusive dialogues take place, while we haggle over a farthing, and shout loud enough to be heard from San Casciano.

'But when evening falls I go home and enter my writing-room. On the threshold I put off my country habits, filthy with mud and mire, and array myself in royal courtly garments. Thus worthily attired, I make my entrance into the ancient courts of the men of old, where they receive me with love, and where I feed upon that food which only is my own and for which I was born. I feel no shame in conversing with them and asking them the reason of their actions.

'They, moved by their humanity, make answer. For four hours' space I feel no annoyance, forget all care; poverty cannot frighten, nor death appal me. I am carried away to their society. And since Dante says "that there is no science unless we retain what we have learned" I have set down what I have gained from their discourse, and composed a treatise, De Principalibus, in which I enter as deeply as I can into the science of the subject, with reasonings on the nature of principality, its several species, and how they are acquired, how maintained, how lost. If you ever liked any of my scribblings, this ought to suit your taste. To a prince, and especially to a new prince, it ought to prove acceptable. Therefore I am dedicating it to the Magnificence of Giuliano.'

Such is the account that Niccolò Machiavelli renders of himself when after imprisonment, torture, and disgrace, at the age of forty-four, he first turned to serious writing. For the first twenty-six or indeed twenty-nine of those years we have not one line from his pen or one word of vaguest information about him. Throughout all his works written for publication, there is little news about himself. Montaigne could

properly write, 'Ainsi, lecteur, je suis moy-mesme la matière de mon livre.' But the matter of Machiavelli was far other: 'Io ho espresso quanto io so, e quanto io ho imparato per una lunga pratica e continua lezione delle cose del mondo.'

Machiavelli was born on the 3rd of May 1469. The period of his life almost exactly coincides with that of Cardinal Wolsey. He came of the old and noble Tuscan stock of Montespertoli, who were men of their hands in the eleventh century. He carried their coat, but the property had been wasted and divided. His forefathers had held office of high distinction, but had fallen away as the new wealth of the bankers and traders increased in Florence. He himself inherited a small property in San Casciano and its neighbourhood, which assured him a sufficient, if somewhat lean, independence. Of his education we know little enough. He was well acquainted with Latin, and knew, perhaps, Greek enough to serve his turn. 'Rather not without letters than lettered,' Varchi describes him. That he was not loaded down with learned reading proved probably a great advantage. The coming of the French, and the expulsion of the Medici, the proclamation of the Republic (1494), and later the burning of Savonarola convulsed Florence and threw open many public offices. It has been suggested, but without much foundation, that some clerical work was found for Machiavelli in 1494 or even earlier. It is certain that on July 14, 1498, he was appointed Chancellor and Secretary to the Dieci di Libertà e Pace, an office which he held till the close of his political life at fall of the Republic in 1512.

The functions of his Council were extremely varied, and in the hands of their Secretary became yet more diversified. They represented in some sense the Ministry for Home, Military, and especially for Foreign Affairs. It is impossible to give any full account of Machiavelli's official duties. He wrote many thousands of despatches and official letters, which are still preserved. He was on constant errands of State through the Florentine dominions. But his diplomatic missions and what he learned by them make the main interest of his office. His first adventure of importance was to the Court of Caterina Sforza, the Lady of Forlì, in which matter that astute Countess entirely bested the teacher of all diplomatists to be. In 1500 he smelt powder at the siege at Pisa, and was sent to France to allay the irritations of Louis XII. Many similar and lesser missions follow. The results are in no case of great importance, but the opportunities to the Secretary of learning men and things, intrigue and policy, the Court and the gutter were invaluable. At the camp of Cæsar Borgia, in 1502, he found in his host that fantastic hero whom he incarnated in The Prince, and he was practically an eye-witness of the amazing masterpiece, the Massacre of Sinigaglia. The next year he is sent to Rome with a watching brief at the election of Julius II., and in 1506 is again sent to negotiate with the Pope. An embassy to the Emperor Maximilian, a second mission to the French King at Blois, in which he persuades Louis XII. to postpone the threatened General Council of the Church (1511), and constant expeditions to report upon and set in order unrestful towns and provinces did not fulfil his activity. His pen was never idle. Reports, despatches, elaborate monographs on France, Germany, or wherever he

might be, and personal letters innumerable, and even yet unpublished, ceased not night nor day. Detail, wit, character-drawing, satire, sorrow, bitterness, all take their turn. But this was only a fraction of his work. By duty and by expediency he was bound to follow closely the internal politics of Florence where his enemies and rivals abounded. And in all these years he was pushing forward and carrying through with unceasing and unspeakable vigour the great military dream of his life, the foundation of a National Militia and the extinction of Mercenary Companies. But the fabric he had fancied and thought to have built proved unsubstantial. The spoilt half-mutinous levies whom he had spent years in odious and unwilling training failed him at the crowning moment in strength and spirit: and the fall of the Republic implied the fall of Machiavelli and the close of his official life. He struggled hard to save himself, but the wealthy classes were against him, perhaps afraid of him, and on them the Medici relied. For a year he was forbidden to leave Florentine territory, and for a while was excluded from the Palazzo. Later his name was found in a list of Anti-Medicean conspirators. He was arrested and decorously tortured with six turns of the rack, and then liberated for want of evidence.

For perhaps a year after his release the Secretary engaged in a series of tortuous intrigues to gain the favour of the Medici. Many of the stories may be exaggerated, but none make pleasant reading, and nothing proved successful. His position was miserable. Temporarily crippled by torture, out of favour with the Government, shunned by his friends, in deep poverty, burdened with debt and with a wife and four children, his

material circumstances were ill enough. But, worse still, he was idle. He had deserved well of the Republic, and had never despaired of it, and this was his reward. He seemed to himself a broken man. He had no great natural dignity, no great moral strength. He profoundly loved and admired Dante, but he could not for one moment imitate him. He sought satisfaction in sensuality of life and writing, but found no comfort. Great things were stirring in the world and he had neither part nor lot in them. By great good fortune he began a correspondence with his friend Francesco Vettori, the Medicean Ambassador at Rome, to whom he appeals for his good offices: 'And if nothing can be done, I must live as I came into the world, for I was born poor and learnt to want before learning to enjoy.' Before long these two diplomats had co-opted themselves into a kind of Secret Cabinet of Europe. It is a strange but profoundly interesting correspondence, both politically and personally. Nothing is too great or too small, too glorious or too mean for their pens. Amid foolish anecdotes and rather sordid love affairs the politics of Europe, and especially of Italy, are dissected and discussed. Leo X. had now plunged into political intrigue. Ferdinand of Spain was in difficulty. France had allied herself with Venice. The Swiss are the Ancient Romans, and may conquer Italy. Then back again, or rather constant throughout, the love intrigues and the 'likely wench hard-by who may help to pass our time.' But through it all there is an ache at Machiavelli's heart, and on a sudden he will break down, crying,

Però se aleuna volta io rido e canto
Facciol, perchè non ho se non quest' una

Via da sfogare il mio angoscioso pianto.

Vettori promised much, but nothing came of it. By 1515 the correspondence died away, and the Ex-Secretary found for himself at last the true pathway through his vale of years.

The remainder of Machiavelli's life is bounded by his books. He settled at his villa at San Casciano, where he spent his day as he describes in the letter quoted at the beginning of this essay. In 1518 he began to attend the meetings of the Literary Club in the Orti Oricellarii, and made new and remarkable friends. 'Era amato grandamente da loro ... e della sua conversazione si dilettavano maravigliosamente, tenendo in prezzo grandissimo tutte l'opere sue,' which shows the personal authority he exercised. Occasionally he was employed by Florentine merchants to negotiate for them at Venice, Genoa, Lucca, and other places. In 1519 Cardinal Medici deigned to consult him as to the Government, and commissioned him to write the History of Florence. But in the main he wrote his books and lived the daily life we know. In 1525 he went to Rome to present his History to Clement VII., and was sent on to Guicciardini. In 1526 he was busy once more with military matters and the fortification of Florence. On the 22nd of June 1527 he died at Florence immediately after the establishment of the second Republic. He had lived as a practising Christian, and so died, surrounded by his wife and family. Wild legends grew about his death, but have no foundation. A peasant clod in San Casciano could not have made a simpler end. He was buried in the family Chapel in Santa Croce, and a monument was there at

last erected with the epitaph by Doctor Ferroni--'Tanto nomini nullum par elogium.' The first edition of his complete works was published in 1782, and was dedicated to Lord Cowper.

What manner of man was Machiavelli at home and in the market-place? It is hard to say. There are doubtful busts, the best, perhaps, that engraved in the 'Testina' edition of 1550, so-called on account of the portrait. 'Of middle height, slender figure, with sparkling eyes, dark hair, rather a small head, a slightly aquiline nose, a tightly closed mouth: all about him bore the impress of a very acute observer and thinker, but not that of one able to wield much influence over others.' Such is a reconstruction of him by one best able to make one. 'In his conversation,' says Varchi, 'Machiavelli was pleasant, serviceable to his friends, a friend of virtuous men, and, in a word, worthy to have received from Nature either less genius or a better mind.' If not much above the moral standard of the day he was certainly not below it. His habits were loose and his language lucid and licentious. But there is no bad or even unkind act charged against him. To his honesty and good faith he very fairly claims that his poverty bears witness. He was a kind, if uncertain, husband and a devoted father. His letters to his children are charming. Here is one written soon before his death to his little son Guido.--'Guido, my darling son, I received a letter of thine and was delighted with it, particularly because you tell me of your full recovery, the best news I could have. If God grants life to us both I expect to make a good man of you, only you must do your fair share yourself.' Guido is to stick to his books and music, and if the family

mule is too fractious, 'Unbridle him, take off the halter and turn him loose at Montepulciano. The farm is large, the mule is small, so no harm can come of it. Tell your mother, with my love, not to be nervous. I shall surely be home before any trouble comes. Give a kiss to Baccina, Piero, and Totto: I wish I knew his eyes were getting well. Be happy and spend as little as you may. Christ have you in his keeping.'--There is nothing exquisite or divinely delicate in this letter, but there are many such, and they were not written by a bad man, any more than the answers they evoke were addressed to one. There is little more save of a like character that is known of Machiavelli the man. But to judge him and his work we must have some knowledge of the world in which he was to move and have his being.

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At the beginning of the sixteenth century Italy was rotten to the core. In the close competition of great wickedness the Vicar of Christ easily carried off the palm, and the Court of Alexander VI. was probably the wickedest meeting-place of men that has ever existed upon earth. No virtue, Christian or Pagan, was there to be found; little art that was not sensuous or sensual. It seemed as if Bacchus and Venus and Priapus had come to their own again, and yet Rome had not ceased to call herself Christian.

'Owing to the evil ensample of the Papal Court,' writes Machiavelli, 'Italy has lost all piety and all religion: whence follow infinite

troubles and disorders; for as religion implies all good, so its absence implies the contrary. To the Church and priests of Rome we owe another even greater disaster which is the cause of her ruin. I mean that the Church has maintained, and still maintains Italy divided.' The Papacy is too weak to unite and rule, but strong enough to prevent others doing so, and is always ready to call in the foreigner to crush all Italians to the foreigner's profit, and Guicciardini, a high Papal officer, commenting on this, adds, 'It would be impossible to speak so ill of the Roman Court, but that more abuse should not be merited, seeing it is an infamy, and example of all the shames and scandals of the world.' The lesser clergy, the monks, the nuns followed, with anxious fidelity, the footsteps of their shepherds. There was hardly a tonsure in Italy which covered more than thoughts and hopes of lust and avarice. Religion and morals which God had joined together, were set by man a thousand leagues asunder. Yet religion still sat upon the alabaster throne of Peter, and in the filthy straw of the meanest Calabrian confessional. And still deeper remained a blind devoted superstition. Vitellozzo Vitelli, as Machiavelli tells us, while being strangled by Cæesar Borgia's assassin, implored his murderer to procure for him the absolution of that murderer's father. Gianpaolo Baglioni, who reigned by parricide and lived in incest, was severely blamed by the Florentines for not killing Pope Julius II. when the latter was his guest at Perugia. And when Gabrino Fondato, the tyrant of Cremona, was on the scaffold, his only regret was that when he had taken his guests, the Pope and Emperor, to the top of the Cremona tower, four hundred feet high, his nerve failed him and he did not push them both over. Upon this anarchy of religion,

morals, and conduct breathed suddenly the inspiring breath of Pagan antiquity which seemed to the Italian mind to find its finest climax in tyrannicide. There is no better instance than in the plot of the Pazzi at Florence. Francesco Pazzi and Bernardo Bandini decided to kill Lorenzo and Giuliano de' Medici in the cathedral at the moment of the elevation of the Host. They naturally took the priest into their confidence. They escorted Giuliano to the Duomo, laughing and talking, and playfully embraced him--to discover if he wore armour under his clothes. Then they killed him at the moment appointed.

Nor were there any hills from which salvation might be looked for. Philosophy, poetry, science, expressed themselves in terms of materialism. Faith and hope are ever the last survivors in the life of a man or of a nation. But in Italy these brave comforters were at their latest breath. It is perhaps unfair to accept in full the judgment of Northern travellers. The conditions, training, needs of England and Germany were different. In these countries courage was a necessity, and good faith a paying policy. Subtlety could do little against a two-handed sword in the hands of an angry or partially intoxicated giant. Climate played its part as well as culture, and the crude pleasures and vices of the North seemed fully as loathsome to the refined Italian as did the tortuous policy and the elaborate infamies of the South to their rough invaders. Alone, perhaps, among the nations of Europe the Italians had never understood or practised chivalry, save in such select and exotic schools as the Casa Gioiosa under Vittorino da Feltre at Mantua. The oath of Arthur's knights would have seemed to them

mere superfluity of silliness. Onore connoted credit, reputation, and prowess. Virtù, which may be roughly translated as mental ability combined with personal daring, set the standard and ruled opinion. 'Honour in the North was subjective: Onore in Italy objective.' Individual liberty, indeed, was granted in full to all, at the individual's risk. The love of beauty curbed grossness and added distinction. Fraud became an art and force a science. There is liberty for all, but for the great ones there is licence. And when the day of trial comes, it is the Churchmen and the Princes who can save neither themselves nor man, nor thing that is theirs. To such a world was Machiavelli born. To whom should he turn? To the People? To the Church? To the Princes and Despots? But hear him:--

> 'There shall never be found any good mason, which will beleeve to be able to make a faire image of a peece of marble ill hewed, but verye well of a rude peece. Our Italian Princes beleeved, before they tasted the blowes of the outlandish warre, that it should suffice a Prince to know by writinges, how to make a subtell aunswere, to write a goodly letter, to shewe in sayinges, and in woordes, witte and promptenesse, to know how to canvas a fraude, to decke themselves with precious stones and gold, to sleepe and to eate with greater glory then other: To kepe many lascivious persons about them, to governe themselves with their subjects, covetously and proudely: To roote in idlenes, to give the degrees of the exercise of warre for good will, to dispise if any should have shewed them any laudable

waie, minding that their wordes should bee aunswers of oracles: nor the sely wretches were not aware that they prepared themselves to be a pray to whome so ever should assaulte them. Hereby grew then in the thousand fowre hundred and nintie and fowre yere, the great feares, the sodaine flightes and the marveilous losses: and so three most mighty states which were in Italie, have bene dievers times sacked and destroyed. But that which is worse, is where those that remaine, continue in the very same errour, and liev in the verie same disorder and consider not, that those who in olde time would keepe their states, caused to be done these thinges, which of me hath beene reasoned, and that their studies were, to prepare the body to diseases, and the minde not to feare perills. Whereby grewe that Cæsar, Alexander, and all those men and excellent Princes in olde time, were the formost amongst the fighters, going armed on foote: and if they lost their state, they would loose their life, so that they lievd and died vertuously.'

Such was the clay that waited the moulding of the potter's hand. 'Posterity, that high court of appeal, which is never tired of eulogising its own justice and discernment,' has recorded harsh sentence on the Florentine. It is better to-day to let him speak for himself.

The slender volume of The Prince has probably produced wider discussion, more bitter controversy, more varied interpretations and a deeper influence than any book save Holy Writ. Kings and statesmen,

philosophers and theologians, monarchists and republicans have all and always used or abused it for their purposes. Written in 1513, the first year of Machiavelli's disgrace, concurrently with part of the Discorsi, which contain the germs of it, the book represents the fulness of its author's thought and experience. It was not till after Machiavelli's death, that it was published in 1532, by order of Clement VII. Meanwhile, however, in manuscript it had been widely read and favourably received.

The mere motive of its creation and dedication has been the theme of many volumes. Machiavelli was poor, was idle, was out of favour, and therefore, though a Republican, wrote a devilish hand-book of tyranny to strengthen the Medici and recover his position. Machiavelli, a loyal Republican, wrote a primer of such fiendish principles as might lure the Medici to their ruin. Machiavelli's one idea was to ruin the rich: Machiavelli's one idea was to oppress the poor: he was a Protestant, a Jesuit, an Atheist: a Royalist and a Republican. And the book published by one Pope's express authority was utterly condemned and forbidden, with all its author's works, by the express command of another (1559). But before facing the whirlwind of savage controversy which raged and rages still about The Prince, it may be well to consider shortly the book itself--consider it as a new book and without prejudice. The purpose of its composition is almost certainly to be found in the plain fact that Machiavelli, a politician and a man of letters, wished to write a book upon the subject which had been his special study and lay nearest to his business and bosom. To ensure prominence for such a book,

to engage attention and incidentally perhaps to obtain political employment for himself, he dedicated it to Lorenzo de' Medici, the existing and accepted Chief of the State. But far and above such lighter motives stood the fact that he saw in Lorenzo the only man who might conceivably bring to being the vast dream of patriotism which the writer had imagined. The subject he proposed to himself was largely, though not wholly, conditioned by the time and place in which he lived. He wrote for his countrymen and he wrote for his own generation. He had heard with his ears and seen with his eyes the alternate rending anarchy and moaning paralysis of Italy. He had seen what Agricola had long before been spared the sight of. And what he saw, he saw not through a glass darkly or distorted, but in the whitest, driest light, without flinching and face to face. 'We are much beholden,' writes Bacon, 'to Machiavelli and others that wrote what men do, and not what they ought to do.' He did not despair of Italy, he did not despair even of Italian unity. But he despaired of what he saw around him, and he was willing at almost any price to end it. He recognised, despite the nominal example of Venice, that a Republican system was impossible, and that the small Principalities and Free Cities were corrupt beyond hope of healing. A strong central unifying government was imperative, and at that day such government could only be vested in a single man. For it must ever be closely remembered, as will be pointed out again, that throughout the book the Prince is what would now be called the Government. And then he saw with faithful prophecy, in the splendid peroration of his hope, a hope deferred for near four hundred years, he saw beyond the painful paths of blood and tyranny, a vision of deliverance and union. For at

least it is plain that in all things Machiavelli was a passionate patriot, and Amo la patria mia più dell' anima is found in one of the last of many thousand letters that his untiring pen had written.

The purpose, then, of The Prince is to lay down rules, within the possibilities of the time, for the making of a man who shall create, increase, and maintain a strong and stable government. This is done in the main by a plain presentation of facts, a presentation condensed and critical but based on men and things as they actually were. The ethical side is wholly omitted: the social and economical almost entirely. The aspect is purely political, with the underlying thought, it may be supposed, that under the postulated government, all else will prosper.

Machiavelli opens by discussing the various forms of governments, which he divides into Republics and Principalities. Of the latter some may be hereditary and some acquired. Of hereditary states he says little and quotes but one, the Duchy of Ferrara. He then turns to his true subject, the acquisition and preservation of States wholly new or new in part, States such as he saw himself on every side around him. Having gained possession of a new State, he says, you must first extirpate the family of your predecessor. You should then either reside or plant colonies, but not trust to garrisons. 'Colonies are not costly to the Prince, are more faithful and cause less offence to the subject States: those whom they may injure being poor and scattered, are prevented from doing mischief. For it should be observed that men ought either to be caressed or trampled out, seeing that small injuries may be avenged, whereas

great ones destroy the possibility of retaliation: and so the damage that has to be inflicted ought to be such that it need involve no fear of reprisals.' There is perhaps in all Machiavelli no better example of his lucid scientific method than this passage. There is neither excuse nor hypocrisy. It is merely a matter of business calculation. Mankind is the raw material, the State is the finished work. Further you are to conciliate your neighbours who are weak and abase the strong, and you must not let the stranger within your gates. Above all look before as well as after and think not to leave it to time, godere li benefici del tempo, but, as did the Romans, strike and strike at once. For illustration he criticises, in a final and damning analysis, the career of Louis XII. in Italy. There was no canon of statecraft so absolute that the King did not ignore it, and in inevitable Nemesis, there was no ultimate disaster so crowning as not to be achieved.

After observing that a feudal monarchy is much less easy of conquest than a despotism, since in the one case you must vanquish many lesser lordships while in the other you merely replace slaves by slaves, Machiavelli considers the best method of subjugating Free Cities. Here again is eminent the terrible composure and the exact truth of his politics. A conquered Free City you may of course rule in person, or you may construct an oligarchy to govern for you, but the only safe way is to destroy it utterly, since 'that name of Liberty, those ancient usages of Freedom,' are things 'which no length of years and no benefits can extinguish in the nation's mind, things which no pains or forethought can uproot unless the citizens be utterly destroyed.'

Hitherto the discussion has ranged round the material politics of the matter, the acquisition of material power. Machiavelli now turns to the heart of his matter, the proper character and conduct of a new Prince in a new Principality and the ways by which he shall deal most fortunately with friend and foe. For fortune it is, as well as ability, which go to the making of the man and the maintenance of his power.

In the manner of the day Moses, Cyrus, Romulus, and Theseus are led across the stage in illustration. The common attribute of all such fortunate masters of men was force of arms, while the mission of an unarmed prophet such as Savonarola was foredoomed to failure. In such politics Machiavelli is positive and ruthless: force is and must be the remedy and the last appeal, a principle which indeed no later generation has in practice set at naught. But in the hard dry eyes of the Florentine Secretary stood, above all others, one shining figure, a figure to all other eyes, from then till now, wrapped in mysterious and miasmatic cloud. In the pages of common history he was a tyrant, he was vicious beyond compare, he was cruel beyond the Inquisition, he was false beyond the Father of Lies, he was the Antichrist of Rome and he was a failure: but he was the hero of Niccolò Machiavelli, who, indeed, found in Cæsar Borgia the fine flower of Italian politics in the Age of the Despots. Son of the Pope, a Prince of the Church, a Duke of France, a master of events, a born soldier, diplomatist, and more than half a statesman, Cæsar seemed indeed the darling of gods and men whom original fortune had crowned with inborn ability. Machiavelli knew him as well as

it was possible to know a soul so tortuous and secret, and he had been present at the most critical and terrible moments of Cæsar's life. That in despite of a life which the world calls infamous, in despite of the howling execrations of all Christendom, in despite of ultimate and entire failures, Machiavelli could still write years after, 'I know not what lessons I could teach a new Prince more useful than the example of his actions,' exhibits the ineffaceable impressions that Cæsar Borgia had made upon the most subtle and observant mind of modern history.

Cæsar was the acknowledged son of Pope Alexander by his acknowledged mistress Vannozza dei Cattani. Born in 1472, he was an Archbishop and a Cardinal at sixteen, and the murderer of his elder brother at an age when modern youths are at college. He played his part to the full in the unspeakable scandals of the Vatican, but already 'he spoke little and people feared him.' Ere long the splendours of the Papacy seemed too remote and uncertain for his fierce ambition, and, indeed, through his father, he already wielded both the temporal and the spiritual arms of Peter. To the subtlety of the Italian his Spanish blood had lent a certain stern resolution, and as with Julius and Sulla the lust for sloth and sensuality were quickened by the lust for sway. He unfrocked himself with pleasure. He commenced politician, soldier, and despot. And for the five years preceding Alexander's death he may almost be looked upon as a power in Europe. Invested Duke of Romagna, that hot-bed of petty tyranny and tumult, he repressed disorder through his governor Messer Ramiro with a relentless hand. When order reigned, Machiavelli tells us he walked out one morning into the market-place at Cesena and

saw the body of Ramiro, who had borne the odium of reform, lying in two pieces with his head on a lance, and a bloody axe by his side. Cæsar reaped the harvest of Ramiro's severity, and the people recognising his benevolence and justice were 'astounded and satisfied.'

But the gaze of the Borgia was not bounded by the strait limits of a mere Italian Duchy. Whether indeed there mingled with personal ambition an ideal of a united Italy, swept clean of the barbarians, it is hard to say, though Machiavelli would have us believe it. What is certain is that he desired the supreme dominion in Italy for himself, and to win it spared neither force nor fraud nor the help of the very barbarians themselves. With a decree of divorce and a Cardinal's hat he gained the support of France, the French Duchy of Valentinois, and the sister of the King of Navarre to wife. By largesse of bribery and hollow promises he brought to his side the great families of Rome, his natural enemies, and the great Condottieri with their men-at-arms. When by their aid he had established and extended his government he mistrusted their good faith. With an infinity of fascination and cunning, without haste and without rest, he lured these leaders, almost more cunning than himself, to visit him as friends in his fortress of Sinigaglia. 'I doubt if they will be alive to-morrow morning,' wrote Machiavelli, who was on the spot. He was right. Cæsar caused them to be strangled the same night, while his father dealt equal measure to their colleagues and adherents in Rome. Thenceforth, distrusting mercenaries, he found and disciplined out of a mere rabble, a devoted army of his own, and having unobtrusively but completely extirpated the whole families of those

whose thrones he had usurped, not only the present but the future seemed assured to him.

He had fulfilled the first of Machiavelli's four conditions. He rapidly achieved the remaining three. He bought the Roman nobles so as to be able to put a bridle in the new 'Pope's mouth.' He bought or poisoned or packed or terrorised the existing College of Cardinals and selected new Princes of the Church who should accept a Pontiff of his choosing. He was effectively strong enough to resist the first onset upon him at his father's death. Five years had been enough for so great an undertaking. One thing alone he had not and indeed could not have foreseen. 'He told me himself on the day on which (Pope) Julius was created, that he had foreseen and provided for everything else that could happen on his father's death, but had never anticipated that, when his father died, he too should have been at death's door.' Even so the fame and splendour of his name for a while maintained his authority against his unnumbered enemies. But soon the great betrayer was betrayed. 'It is well to cheat those who have been masters of treachery,' he had said himself in his hours of brief authority. His wheel had turned full cycle. Within three years his fate, like that of Charles XII., was destined to a foreign strand, a petty fortress, and a dubious hand. Given over to Spain he passed three years obscurely. 'He was struck down in a fight at Viana in Navarre (1507) after a furious resistance: he was stripped of his fine armour by men who did not know his name or quality and his body was left naked on the bare ground, bloody and riddled with wounds. He was only thirty-one.' And so the star of Machiavelli's hopes and dreams was

quenched for a season in the clouds from which it came.

It seems worth while to sketch the strange tempestuous career of Cæsar Borgia because in the remaining chapters of The Prince and elsewhere in his writings, it is the thought and memory of Valentinois, transmuted doubtless and idealised by the lapse of years, that largely inform and inspire the perfect Prince of Machiavelli. But it must not be supposed that in life or in mind they were intimate or even sympathetic. Machiavelli criticises his hero liberally and even harshly. But for the work he wanted done he had found no better craftsman and no better example to follow for those that might come after. Morals and religion did not touch the purpose of his arguments except as affecting policy. In policy virtues may be admitted as useful agents and in the chapter following that on Cæsar, entitled, curiously enough, 'Of those who by their crimes come to be Princes,' he lays down that 'to slaughter fellow citizens, to betray friends, to be devoid of honour, pity and religion cannot be counted as merits, for these are means which may lead to power but which confer no glory.' Cruelty he would employ without hesitation but with the greatest care both in degree and in kind. It should be immediate and complete and leave no possibility of counter-revenge. For it is never forgotten by the living, and 'he deceives himself who believes that, with the great, recent benefits cause old wrongs to be forgotten.' On the other hand 'Benefits should be conferred little by little so that they may be more fully relished.' The cruelty proper to a Prince (Government, for as ever they are identical) aims only at authority. Now authority must spring from love or fear. It were best to

combine both motives to obedience but you cannot. The Prince must remember that men are fickle, and love at their own pleasure, and that men are fearful and fear at the pleasure of the Prince. Let him therefore depend on what is of himself, not on that which is of others. 'Yet if he win not love he may escape hate, and so it will be if he does not meddle with the property or women-folk of his subjects.' When he must punish let him kill. 'For men will sooner forget the death of their father than the loss of their estate.' And moreover you cannot always go on killing, but a Prince who has once set himself to plundering will never stop. This is the more needful because the only secure foundation of his rule lies in his trust of the people and in their support. And indeed again and again you shall find no more thorough democrat than this teacher of tyrants. 'The people own better broader qualities, fidelities and passions than any Prince and have better cause to show for them.' 'As for prudence and stability, I say that a people is more stable, more prudent, and of better judgment than a Prince.' If the people go wrong it is almost certainly the crime or negligence of the Prince which drives or leads them astray. 'Better far than any number of fortresses is not to be hated by your people.' The support of the people and a national militia make the essential strength of the Prince and of the State.

The chapters on military organisation may be more conveniently considered in conjunction with The Art of War. It is enough at present to point out two or three observations of Machiavelli which touch politics from the military side. To his generation they were entirely

novel, though mere commonplace to-day. National strength means national stability and national greatness; and this can be achieved, and can only be achieved, by a national army. The Condottiere system, born of sloth and luxury, has proved its rottenness. Your hired general is either a tyrant or a traitor, a bully or a coward. 'In a word the armour of others is too wide or too strait for us: it falls off us, or it weighs us down.' And in a fine illustration he compares auxiliary troops to the armour of Saul which David refused, preferring to fight Goliath with his sling and stone.

Having assured the external security of the State, Machiavelli turns once more to the qualities and conduct of the Prince. So closely packed are these concluding chapters that it is almost impossible to compress them further. The author at the outset states his purpose: 'Since it is my object to write what shall be useful to whosoever understands it, it seems to me better to follow the practical truth of things rather than an imaginary view of them. For many Republics and Princedoms have been imagined that were never seen or known to exist in reality. And the manner in which we live and in which we ought to live, are things so wide asunder that he who suits the one to betake himself to the other is more likely to destroy than to save himself.' Nothing that Machiavelli wrote is more sincere, analytic, positive and ruthless. He operates unflinchingly on an assured diagnosis. The hand never an instant falters, the knife is never blunt. He deals with what is, and not with what ought to be. Should the Prince be all-virtuous, all-liberal, all-humane? Should his word be his bond for ever? Should true religion

be the master-passion of his life? Machiavelli considers. The first duty of the Prince (or Government) is to maintain the existence, stability, and prosperity of the State. Now if all the world were perfect so should the Prince be perfect too. But such are not the conditions of human life. An idealising Prince must fall before a practising world. A Prince must learn in self-defence how to be bad, but like Cæsar Borgia, he must be a great judge of occasion. And what evil he does must be deliberate, appropriate, and calculated, and done, not selfishly, but for the good of the State of which he is trustee. There is the power of Law and the power of Force. The first is proper to men, the second to beasts. And that is why Achilles was brought up by Cheiron the Centaur that he might learn to use both natures. A ruler must be half lion and half fox, a fox to discern the toils, a lion to drive off the wolves. Merciful, faithful, humane, religious, just, these he may be and above all should seem to be, nor should any word escape his lips to give the lie to his professions: and in fact he should not leave these qualities but when he must. He should, if possible, practise goodness, but under necessity should know how to pursue evil. He should keep faith until occasion alter, or reason of state compel him to break his pledge. Above all he should profess and observe religion, 'because men in general judge rather by the eye than by the hand, and every one can see but few can touch.' But none the less, must he learn (as did William the Silent, Elizabeth of England, and Henry of Navarre) how to subordinate creed to policy when urgent need is upon him. In a word, he must realise and face his own position, and the facts of mankind and of the world. If not veracious to his conscience, he must be veracious to facts. He must not

be bad for badness' sake, but seeing things as they are, must deal as he can to protect and preserve the trust committed to his care. Fortune is still a fickle jade, but at least the half our will is free, and if we are bold we may master her yet. For Fortune is a woman who, to be kept under, must be beaten and roughly handled, and we see that she is more ready to be mastered by those who treat her so, than by those who are shy in their wooing. And always, like a woman, she gives her favours to the young, because they are less scrupulous and fiercer and more audaciously command her to their will.

And so at the last the sometime Secretary of the Florentine Republic turns to the new Master of the Florentines in splendid exhortation. He points to no easy path. He proposes no mean ambition. He has said already that 'double will that Prince's glory be, who has founded a new realm and fortified it and adorned it with good laws, good arms, good friends, and good examples.' But there is more and better to be done. The great misery of men has ever made the great leaders of men. But was Israel in Egypt, were the Persians, the Athenians ever more enslaved, down-trodden, disunited, beaten, despoiled, mangled, overrun and desolate than is our Italy to-day? The barbarians must be hounded out, and Italy be free and one. Now is the accepted time. All Italy is waiting and only seeks the man. To you the darling of Fortune and the Church this splendid task is given, to and to the army of Italy and of Italians only. Arm Italy and lead her. To you, the deliverer, what gates would be closed, what obedience refused! What jealousies opposed, what homage denied. Love, courage, and fixed fidelity await you, and under

your standards shall the voice of Petrarch be fulfilled:

Virtu contro al furore
Prenderà l'arme e fia il combatter corto:
Chè l'antico valore
Negl' Italici cor non è ancor morto.

Such is The Prince of Machiavelli. The vision of its breathless exhortation seemed then as but a landscape to a blind man's eye. But the passing of three hundred and fifty years of the misery he wept for brought at the last, almost in perfect exactness, the fulfilment of that impossible prophecy.

There is no great book in the world of smaller compass than The Prince of Machiavelli. There is no book more lucidly, directly, and plainly written. There is no book that has aroused more vehement, venomous, and even truculent controversy from the moment of its publication until to-day. And it is asserted with great probability that The Prince has had a more direct action upon real life than any other book in the world, and a larger share in breaking the chains and lighting the dark places of the Middle Ages. It is a truism to say that Machiavellism existed before Machiavelli. The politics of Gian Galeazzo Visconti, of Louis XI. of France, of Ferdinand of Spain, of the Papacy, of Venice, might have been dictated by the author of The Prince. But Machiavelli was the first to observe, to compare, to diagnose, to analyse, and to formulate their principles of government. The first to establish, not a

divorce, but rather a judicial separation between the morals of a man and the morals of a government. It is around the purpose and possible results of such a separation in politics, ethics, and religion that the storm has raged most fiercely. To follow the path of that storm through near four centuries many volumes would be needed, and it will be more convenient to deal with the more general questions in summing up the influence of Machiavelli as a whole. But the main lines and varying fortunes of the long campaign may be indicated. During the period of its manuscript circulation and for a few years after its publication The Prince was treated with favour or at worst with indifference, and the first mutterings were merely personal to the author. He was a scurvy knave and turncoat with neither bowels nor conscience, almost negligible. But still men read him, and a change in conditions brought a change in front. He had in The Prince, above all in the Discorsi, accused the Church of having ruined Italy and debauched the world. In view of the writer's growing popularity, of the Reformation and the Pagan Renaissance, such charges could no longer be lightly set aside. The Churchmen opened the main attack. Amongst the leaders was Cardinal Pole, to whom the practical precepts of The Prince had been recommended in lieu of the dreams of Plato, by Thomas Cromwell, the malleus monachorum of Henry VIII. The Catholic attack was purely theological, but before long the Jesuits joined in the cry. Machiavelli was burnt in effigy at Ingoldstadt. He was subdolus diabolicarum cogitationum faber, and irrisor et atheos to boot. The Pope himself gave commissions to unite against him, and his books were placed on the Index, together, it must be admitted, with those of Boccaccio, Erasmus,

and Savonarola so the company was goodly. But meanwhile, and perhaps in consequence, editions and translations of The Prince multiplied apace. The great figures of the world were absorbed by it. Charles V., his son, and his courtiers studied the book. Catherine de Medici brought it to France. A copy of The Prince was found on the murdered bodies of Henry III. and Henry IV. Richelieu praised it. Sextus V. analysed it in his own handwriting. It was read at the English Court; Bacon was steeped in it, and quotes or alludes to it constantly. Hobbes and Harrington studied it.

But now another change. So then, cried Innocent Gentillet, the Huguenot, the book is a primer of despotism and Rome, and a grammar for bigots and tyrants. It doubtless is answerable for the Massacre of St. Bartholomew. The man is a chien impur. And in answer to this new huntsman the whole Protestant pack crashed in pursuit. Within fifty years of his death The Prince and Machiavelli himself had become a legend and a myth, a haunting, discomforting ghost that would not be laid. Machiavellism had grown to be a case of conscience both to Catholic and Protestant, to Theologian, Moralist, and Philosopher. In Spain the author, damned in France for his despotism and popery, was as freshly and freely damned for his civil and religious toleration. In England to the Cavaliers he was an Atheist, to the Roundheads a Jesuit. Christina of Sweden annotated him with enthusiasm. Frederick the Great published his Anti-Machiavel brimming with indignation, though it is impossible not to wonder what would have become of Prussia had not the Prussian king so closely followed in practice the precepts of the Florentine, above all

perhaps, as Voltaire observed, in the publication of the Anti-Machiavel itself. No doubt in the eighteenth century, when monarchy was so firmly established as not to need Machiavelli, kings and statesmen sought to clear kingship of the supposed stain he had besmirched them with. But their reading was as little as their misunderstanding was great, and the Florentine Secretary remained the mysterious necromancer. It was left for Rousseau to describe the book of this 'honnête homme et bon citoyen' as 'le livre des Républicains,' and for Napoleon, the greatest of the author's followers if not disciples, to draw inspiration and suggestion from his Florentine forerunner and to justify the murder of the Due d'Enghien by a quotation from The Prince. 'Mais après tout,' he said, 'un homme d'Etat est-il fait pour être sensible? N'est-ce pas un personnage--complètement excentrique, toujours seul d'un côté, avec le monde de l'autre?' and again 'Jugez done s'il doit s'amuser à ménager certaines convenances de sentiments si importantes pour le commun des hommes? Peut-il considérer les liens du sang, les affections, les puérils ménagements de la société? Et dans la situation où il se trouve, que d'actions séparées de l'ensemble et qu'on blâme, quoiqu'elles doivent contribuer au grand oeuvre que tout le monde n'aperçoit pas? ... Malheureux que vous êtes! vous retiendrez vos éloges parce que vous craindrez que le mouvement de cette grande machine ne fasse sur vous l'effet de Gulliver, qui, lorsqu'il déplaçait sa jambe, écrasait les Lilliputiens. Exhortez-vous, devancez le temps, agrandissez votre imagination, regardez de loin, et vous verrez que ces grands personnages que vous croyez violents, cruels, que sais-je? ne sont que des politiques. Ils se connaissent, se jugent mieux que vous, et, quand

ils sont réellement habiles, ils savent se rendre maîtres de leurs passions car ils vont jusqu'à en calculer les effets.' Even in his carriage at Waterloo was found a French translation of The Prince profusely annotated.

But from the first the defence was neither idle nor weak. The assault was on the morals of the man: the fortress held for the ideas of the thinker. He does not treat of morals, therefore he is immoral, cried the plaintiff. Has he spoken truth or falsehood? Is his word the truth and will his truth prevail? was the rejoinder. In Germany and Italy especially and in France and England in less degree, philosophers and critics have argued and written without stint and without cease. As history has grown wider and more scientific so has the preponderance of opinion leaned to the Florentine's favour.

It would be impossible to recapitulate the arguments or even to indicate the varying points of view. And indeed the main hindrance in forming a just idea of The Prince is the constant treatment of a single side of the book and the preconceived intent of the critic. Bacon has already been mentioned. Among later names are Hobbes, Spinoza, Leibnitz. Herder gives qualified approval, while Fichte frankly throws down the glove as The Prince's champion. 'Da man weiss dass politische Machtfragen nie, am wenigsten in einem verderbten Volke, mit den Mitteln der Moral zu lösen sind, so ist es unverständig das Buch von Fürsten zu verschreien. Macchiavelli hatte einen Herrscher zu schildern, keinen Klosterbruder.' The last sentence may at least be accepted as a last word by practical

politicians. Ranke and Macaulay, and a host of competent Germans and Italians have lent their thought and pens to solve the riddle in the Florentine's favour. And lastly, the course of political events in Europe have seemed to many the final justification of the teaching of The Prince. The leaders of the Risorgimento thought that they found in letters, 'writ with a stiletto,' not only the inspirations of patriotism and the aspirations to unity, but a sure and trusted guide to the achievement. Germany recognised in the author a schoolmaster to lead them to unification, and a military instructor to teach them of an Armed People. Half Europe snatched at the principle of Nationality. For in The Prince, Machiavelli not only begat ideas but fertilised the ideas of others, and whatever the future estimation of the book may be, it stands, read or unread, as a most potent, if not as the dominant, factor in European politics for four hundred years.

The Discorsi, printed in Rome by Blado, 1537, are not included in the present edition, as the first English translation did not appear until 1680, when almost the entire works of Machiavelli were published by an anonymous translator in London. But some account and consideration of their contents is imperative to any review of the Florentine's political thoughts. Such Discorsi and Relazioni were not uncommon at the time. The stronger and younger minds of the Renaissance wearied of discussing in the lovely gardens of the Rucellai the ideas of Plato or the allegories of Plotinus. The politics of Aristotle had just been intelligibly translated by Leonardo Bruni (1492). And to-day the young ears and eyes of Florence were alert for an impulse to action. They saw glimpses, in

reopened fields of history, of quarries long grown over where the ore of positive politics lay hid. The men who came to-day to the Orti Oricellarii were men versed in public affairs, men of letters, historians, poets, living greatly in a great age, with Raphael, Michael Angelo, Ariosto, Leonardo going up and down amongst them. Machiavelli was now in fair favour with the Medici, and is described by Strozzi as una persona per sorgere (a rising man). He was welcomed into the group with enthusiasm, and there read and discussed the Discorsi. Nominally mere considerations upon the First Decade of Livy, they rapidly encircled all that was known and thought of policy and state-craft, old and living.

Written concurrently with The Prince, though completed later, the Discorsi contain almost the whole of the thoughts and intents of the more famous book, but with a slightly different application. 'The Prince traces the progress of an ambitious man, the Discorsi the progress of an ambitious people,' is an apt if inadequate criticism. Machiavelli was not the first Italian who thought and wrote upon the problems of his time. But he was the first who discussed grave questions in modern language. He was the first modern political writer who wrote of men and not of man, for the Prince himself is a collective individuality.

'This must be regarded as a general rule,' is ever in Machiavelli's mouth, while Guicciardini finds no value in a general rule, but only in 'long experience and worthy discretion.' The one treated of policy, the

other of politics. Guicciardini considered specifically by what methods to control and arrange an existing Government. Machiavelli sought to create a science, which should show how to establish, maintain, and hinder the decline of states generally conceived. Even Cavour counted the former as a more practical guide in affairs. But Machiavelli was the theorist of humanity in politics, not the observer only. He distinguished the two orders of research. And, during the Italian Renaissance such distinction was supremely necessary. With a crumbled theology, a pagan Pope, amid the wreck of laws and the confusion of social order, il sue particolare and virtù, individuality and ability (energy, political genius, prowess, vital force: virtù is impossible to translate, and only does not mean virtue), were the dominating and unrelenting factors of life. Niccolò Machiavelli, unlike Montesquieu, agreed with Martin Luther that man was bad. It was for both the Wittenberger and the Florentine, in their very separate ways, to found the school and wield the scourge. In the naked and unashamed candour of the time Guicciardini could say that he loathed the Papacy and all its works. 'For all that, he adds, 'the preferments I have enjoyed, have forced me for my private ends to set my heart upon papal greatness. Were it not for this consideration, I should love Martin Luther as my second self.' In the Discorsi, Machiavelli bitterly arraigns the Church as having 'deprived Italians of religion and liberty.' He utterly condemns Savonarolà, yet he could love and learn from Dante, and might almost have said with Pym, 'The greatest liberty of the Kingdom is Religion. Thereby we are freed from spiritual evils, and no impositions are so grievous as those that are laid upon the

soul.'

The Florentine postulates religion as an essential element in a strong and stable State. Perhaps, with Gibbon, he deemed it useful to the Magistrate. But his science is impersonal. He will not tolerate a Church that poaches on his political preserves. Good dogma makes bad politics. It must not tamper with liberty or security. And most certainly, with Dante, in the Paradiso, he would either have transformed or omitted the third Beatitude, that the Meek shall inherit the earth. With such a temperament, Machiavelli must ever keep touch with sanity. It was not for him as for Aristotle to imagine what an ideal State should be, but rather to inquire what States actually were and what they might actually become. He seeks first and foremost 'the use that may be derived from history in politics'; not from its incidents but from its general principles. His darling model of a State is to be found where Dante found it, in the Roman Republic. The memory and even the substance of Dante occur again and again. But Dante's inspiration was spiritual: Machiavelli's frankly pagan, and with the latter Fortune takes the place of God. Dante did not love the Papacy, but Machiavelli, pointing out how even in ancient Rome religion was politic or utilitarian, leads up to his famous attack upon the Roman Church, to which he attributes all the shame and losses, political, social, moral, national, that Italy has suffered at her hands. And now for the first time the necessity for Italian Unity is laid plainly down, and the Church and its temporal power denounced as the central obstacles. In religion itself the Secretary saw much merit. 'But when it is an absolute question of the

welfare of our country, then justice or injustice, mercy or cruelty, praise or ignominy, must be set aside, and we must seek alone whatever course may preserve the existence and liberty of the state.' Throughout the Discorsi, Machiavelli in a looser and more expansive form, suggests, discusses, or re-affirms the ideas of The Prince. There is the same absence of judgment on the moral value of individual conduct; the same keen decision of its practical effect as a political act. But here more than in The Prince, he deals with the action and conduct of the people. With his passion for personal and contemporary incarnation he finds in the Swiss of his day the Romans of Republican Rome, and reiterates the comparison in detail. Feudalism, mercenaries, political associations embodied in Arts and Guilds, the Temporal power of the Church, all these are put away, and in their stead he announces the new and daring gospel that for organic unity subjects must be treated as equals and not as inferiors. 'Trust the people' is a maxim he repeats and enforces again and again. And he does not shrink from, but rather urges the corollary, 'Arm the people.' Indeed it were no audacious paradox to state the ideal of Machiavelli, though he nominally preferred a Republic, as a Limited Monarchy, ruling over a Nation in Arms. No doubt he sought, as was natural enough in his day, to construct the State from without rather than to guide and encourage its evolution from within. It seemed to him that, in such an ocean of corruption, Force was a remedy and Fraud no sluttish handmaid. 'Vice n'est-ce pas,' writes Montaigne, of such violent acts of Government, 'car il a quitté sa raison à une plus universelle et puissante raison.' Even so the Prince and the people could only be justified by results. But the public

life is of larger value than the private, and sometimes one man must be crucified for a thousand. Despite all prejudice and make-belief, such a rule and practice has obtained from the Assemblies of Athens to the Parliaments of the twentieth century. But Machiavelli first candidly imparted it to the unwilling consciences and brains of men, and it is he who has been the chosen scape-goat to carry the sins of the people. His earnestness makes him belie his own precept to keep the name and take away the thing. In this, as in a thousand instances, he was not too darkly hidden; he was too plain. 'Machiavelli,' says one who studied the Florentine as hardly another had done, 'Machiavelli hat gesündigt, aber noch mehr ist gegen ihn gesündigt worden.' Liberty is good, but Unity is its only sure foundation. It is the way to the Unity of Government and People that the thoughts both of The Prince and the Discorsi lead, though the incidents be so nakedly presented as to shock the timorous and vex the prurient, the puritan, and the evil thinker. The people must obey the State and fight and die for its salvation, and for the Prince the hatred of the subjects is never good, but their love, and the best way to gain it is by 'not interrupting the subject in the quiet enjoyment of his estate.' Even so bland and gentle a spirit as the poet Gray cannot but comment, 'I rejoice when I see Machiavelli defended or illustrated, who to me appears one of the wisest men that any nation in any age hath produced.'

Throughout both The Prince and the Discorsi are constant allusions to, and often long discussions on, military affairs. The Army profoundly interested Machiavelli both as a primary condition of national existence

and stability, and also, as he pondered upon the contrast between ancient Rome and the Florence that he lived in, as a subject fascinating in itself. His Art of War was probably published in 1520. Before that date the Florentine Secretary had had some personal touch both with the theory and practice of war. As a responsible official in the camp before Pisa he had seen both siege work and fighting. Having lost faith in mercenary forces he made immense attempts to form a National Militia, and was appointed Chancellor of the Nove della Milizia. In Switzerland and the Tyrol he had studied army questions. He planned with Pietro Navarro the defence of Florence and Prato against Charles V. At Verona and Mantua in 1509, he closely studied the famous siege of Padua. From birth to death war and battles raged all about him, and he had personal knowledge of the great captains of the Age. Moreover, he saw in Italy troops of every country, of every quality, in every stage of discipline, in every manner of formation. His love of ancient Rome led him naturally to the study of Livy and Vegetius, and from them with regard to formations, to the relative values of infantry and cavalry and other points of tactics, he drew or deduced many conclusions which hold good to-day. Indeed a German staff officer has written that in reading the Florentine you think you are listening to a modern theorist of war. But for the theorist of those days a lion stood in the path. The art of war was not excepted from the quick and thorough transformation that all earthly and spiritual things were undergoing. Gunpowder, long invented, was being applied. Armour, that, since the beginning, had saved both man and horse, had now lost the half of its virtue. The walls of fortresses, impregnable for a thousand years, became as matchwood ramparts. The

mounted man-at-arms was found with wonder to be no match for the lightly-armoured but nimble foot-man. The Swiss were seen to hold their own with ease against the knighthood of Austria and Burgundy. The Free Companies lost in value and prestige what they added to their corruption and treachery. All these things grew clear to Machiavelli. But his almost fatal misfortune was that he observed and wrote in the mid-moment of the transition. He had no faith in fire-arms, and as regards the portable fire-arms of those days he was right. After the artillery work at Ravenna, Novara, and Marignano it is argued that he should have known better. But he was present at no great battles, and pike, spear, and sword had been the stable weapons of four thousand years. These were indeed too simple to be largely modified, and the future of mechanisms and explosives no prophet uninspired could foresee. And indeed the armament and formation of men were not the main intent of Machiavelli's thought. His care in detail, especially in fortifications, of which he made a special study, in encampments, in plans, in calculations, is immense. Nothing is so trivial as to be left inexact.

But he centred his observation and imagination on the origin, character, and discipline of an army in being. He pictures the horror, waste, and failure of a mercenary system, and lays down the fatal error in Italy of separating civil from military life, converting the latter into a trade. In such a way the soldier grows to a beast, and the citizen to a coward. All this must be changed. The basic idea of this astounding Secretary is to form a National Army, furnished by conscription and informed by the spirit of the New Model of Cromwell. All able-bodied men between the

ages of seventeen and forty should be drilled on stated days and be kept in constant readiness. Once or twice a year each battalion must be mobilised and manoeuvred as in time of war. The discipline must be constant and severe. The men must be not only robust and well-trained, but, above all, virtuous, modest, and disposed to any sacrifice for the public good. So imbued should they be with duty and lofty devotion to their country that though they may rightly deceive the enemy, reward the enemy's deserters and employ spies, yet 'an apple tree laden with fruit might stand untouched in the midst of their encampment.' The infantry should far exceed the cavalry, 'since it is by infantry that battles are won.' Secrecy, mobility, and familiarity with the country are to be objects of special care, and positions should be chosen from which advance is safer than retreat. In war this army must be led by one single leader, and, when peace shines again, they must go back contented to their grateful fellow-countrymen and their wonted ways of living. The conception and foundation of such a scheme, at such a time, by such a man is indeed astounding. He broke with the past and with all contemporary organisations. He forecast the future of military Europe, though his own Italy was the last to win her redemption through his plans. 'Taken all in all,' says a German military writer, 'we may recognise Machiavelli in his inspired knowledge of the principles of universal military discipline as a true prophet and as one of the weightiest thinkers in the field of military construction and constitution. He penetrated the essence of military technique with a precision wholly alien to his period, and it is, so to say, a new psychological proof of the relationship between the art of war and the

art of statecraft, that the founder of Modern Politics is also the first of modern Military Classics.'

But woe to the Florentine Secretary with his thoughts born centuries before their time. As in The Prince, so in the Art of War, he closes with a passionate appeal of great sorrow and the smallest ray of hope. Where shall I hope to find the things that I have told of? What is Italy to-day? What are the Italians? Enervated, impotent, vile. Wherefore, 'I lament mee of nature, the which either ought not to have made mee a knower of this, or it ought to have given mee power, to have bene able to have executed it: For now beeing olde, I cannot hope to have any occasion, to be able so to doo: In consideration whereof, I have bene liberall with you who beeing grave young men, may (when the thinges said of me shall please you) at due times, in favoure of your Princes, helpe them and counsider them. Wherin I would have you not to be afraied, or mistrustfull, because this Province seemes to bee altogether given to raise up againe the things deade, as is seene by the perfection that Poesie, painting, and writing, is now brought unto: Albeit, as much as is looked for of mee, beeing strooken in yeeres, I do mistrust. Where surely, if Fortune had heretofore graunted mee so much state, as suffiseth for a like enterprise, I would not have doubted, but in most short time, to have shewed to the world, how much the auncient orders availe: and without peradventure, either I would have increased it with glory, or lost it without shame.'

In 1520 Machiavelli was an ageing and disappointed man. He was not

popular with any party, but the Medici were willing to use him in minor matters if only to secure his adherence. He was commissioned by Giulio de Medici to write a history of Florence with an annual allowance of 100 florins. In 1525 he completed his task and dedicated the book to its begetter, Pope Clement VII.

In the History, as in much of his other work, Machiavelli enriches the science of humanity with a new department. 'He was the first to contemplate the life of a nation in its continuity, to trace the operation of political forces through successive generations, to contrast the action of individuals with the evolution of causes over which they had but little control, and to bring the salient features of the national biography into relief by the suppression of comparatively unimportant details.' He found no examples to follow, for Villani with all his merits was of a different order. Diarists and chroniclers there were in plenty, and works of the learned men led by Aretino, written in Latin and mainly rhetorical. The great work of Guicciardini was not published till years after the Secretary's death. Machiavelli broke away from the Chronicle or any other existing form. He deliberately applied philosophy to the sequence of facts. He organised civil and political history. He originally intended to begin his work at the year 1234, the year of the return of Cosimo il Vecchio from exile and of the consolidation of Medicean power on the ground that the earlier periods had been covered by Aretino and Bracciolini. But he speedily recognised that they told of nothing but external wars and business while the heart of the history of Florence was left unbared. The work was to do again in

very different manner, and in that manner he did it. Throughout he maintains and insistently insinuates his unfailing explanation of the miseries of Italy; the necessity of unity and the evils of the Papacy which prevents it. In this book dedicated to a Pope he scants nothing of his hatred of the Holy See. For ever he is still seeking the one strong man in a blatant land with almost absolute power to punish, pull down, and reconstruct on an abiding foundation, for to his clear eyes it is ever the events that are born of the man, and not the man of the events. He was the first to observe that the Ghibellines were not only the Imperial party but the party of the aristocrats and influential men, whereas the Guelphs were the party not only of the Church but of the people, and he traces the slow but increasing struggle to the triumph of democracy in the Ordinamenti di Giustizia (1293). But the triumph was not final. The Florentines were 'unable to preserve liberty and could not tolerate slavery.' So the fighting, banishments, bloodshed, cruelty, injustice, began once more. The nobles were in origin Germanic, he points out, the people Latin; so that a racial bitterness gave accent to their hate. But yet, he adds impartially, when the crushed nobility were forced to change their names and no longer dared be heard 'Florence was not only stripped of arms but likewise of all generosity.' It would be impossible to follow the History in detail. The second, seventh and eighth books are perhaps the most powerful and dramatic. Outside affairs and lesser events are lightly touched. But no stories in the world have been told with more intensity than those of the conspiracies in the seventh and eighth books, and none have given a more intimate and accurate perception of the modes of thought and feeling at the time. The

History ends with the death of Lorenzo de Medici in 1492. Enough has been said of its breadth of scope and originality of method. The spirit of clear flaming patriotism, of undying hope that will not in the darkest day despair, the plangent appeal to Italy for its own great sake to rouse and live, all these are found pre-eminently in the History as they are found wherever Machiavelli speaks from the heart of his heart. Of the style a foreigner may not speak. But those who are proper judges maintain that in simplicity and lucidity, vigour, and power, softness, elevation, and eloquence, the style of Machiavelli is 'divine,' and remains, as that of Dante among the poets, unchallenged and insuperable among all writers of Italian prose.

Though Machiavelli must always stand as a political thinker, an historian, and a military theorist it would leave an insufficient idea of his mental activities were there no short notice of his other literary works. With his passion for incarnating his theories in a single personality, he wrote the Life of Castruccio Castracani, a politico-military romance. His hero was a soldier of fortune born Lucca in 1281, and, playing with a free hand, Machiavelli weaves a life of adventure and romance in which his constant ideas of war and politics run through and across an almost imaginary tapestry. He seems to have intended to illustrate and to popularise his ideals and to attain by a story the many whom his discourses could not reach. In verse Machiavelli was fluent, pungent, and prosaic. The unfinished Golden Ass is merely made of paragraphs of the Discorsi twined into rhymes. And the others are little better. Countless pamphlets, essays, and descriptions may be

searched without total waste by the very curious and the very leisurely. The many despatches and multitudinous private letters tell the story both of his life and his mind. But the short but famous Novella di Belfagor Arcidiavolo is excellent in wit, satire, and invention. As a playwright he wrote, among many lesser efforts, one supreme comedy, Mandragola, which Macaulay declares to be better than the best of Goldoni's plays, and only less excellent than the very best of Molière's. Italian critics call it the finest play in Italian. The plot is not for nursery reading, but there are tears and laughter and pity and anger to furnish forth a copious author, and it has been not ill observed that Mandragola is the comedy of a society of which The Prince is the tragedy.

It has been said of the Italians of the Renaissance that with so much of unfairness in their policy, there was an extraordinary degree of fairness in their intellects. They were as direct in thought as they were tortuous in action and could see no wickedness in deceiving a man whom they intended to destroy. To such a charge--if charge it be--Machiavelli would have willingly owned himself answerable. He observed, in order to know, and he wished to use his knowledge for the advancement of good. To him the means were indifferent, provided only that they were always apt and moderate in accordance with necessity, A surgeon has no room for sentiment: in such an operator pity were a crime. It is his to examine, to probe, to diagnose, flinching at no ulcer, sparing neither to himself or to his patient. And if he may not act, he is to lay down very clearly the reasons which led to his

conclusions and to state the mode by which life itself may be saved, cost what amputation and agony it may. This was Machiavelli's business, and he applied his eye, his brains, and his knife with a relentless persistence, which, only because it was so faithful, was not called heroic. And we know that he suffered in the doing of it and that his heart was sore for his patient. But there was no other way. His record is clear and shining. He has been accused of no treachery, of no evil action. His patriotism for Italy as a fatherland, a dream undreamt by any other, never glowed more brightly than when Italy lay low in shame, and ruin, and despair. His faith never faltered, his spirit never shrank. And the Italy that he saw, through dark bursts of storm, broken and sinking, we see to-day riding in the sunny haven where he would have her to be.