Machiavelli: a Study

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This article was prompted by the 350th anniversary of the death of Machiavelli, which was to be commemorated on 22nd June 1877. It was offered to the editor of Temple Bar but was not published. The leaves of the manuscript are held at the British Library (Add. MS58814 Vol.XII), and penned in purple ink on 33 single sheets of paper along with Jefferies' signature at the end. Jefferies bases his opinion on Machiavelli largely on his work The Prince *and the time in which he lived. He sees Machiavelli not as intrinsically evil, but simply as an analyst or historian who has concentrated on the baser instincts of man's nature. He contrasts this with the possibly unjustified Victorian emphasis on the goodness of man. The article was published in 'The Nineteenth Century and After' in September 1948 with an introduction by Samuel J Looker.*

Niccolo Machiavelli, the three hundred and fiftieth anniversary of whose death is to be commemorated on the 22nd of June (1877), has been made a human enigma. As the sand of the desert in course of time accumulated around the Sphinx, half-hiding what was a mystery in itself, so an endless succession of commentators piling up their theories, have almost succeeded in totally obscuring the object of their study. His character has become encrusted with a whole genera of political crimes, as barnacles cling to a ship. Before the man himself can be observed the dust of ages must be swept away. In the ripe hour of classical antiquity the statues of the Gods were draped and gilded: in our own time we prefer to see them in their naked majesty and beauty; and so with the human actors in the drama of history we desire to note their proportions when morally bared to the eye. But how intense must have been the force of genius in a man, who in the mind of the world, has focussed upon his memory such a brilliant galaxy of names as Alexander VI, Cesare Borgia and the Medici! The moment we think of Machiavelli we remember these; a complete romance, a complete history gathers around him.

Most readers of modern literature have probably been introduced to Machiavelli by the masterly hand of Bulwer Lytton. The immortal Riccabocca with his red umbrella, his stoical philosophy when imprisoned in the village stocks, his daily study of a huge folio of the Florentine politician, his child-like personal simplicity and yet diabolical speech, incidentally conveys with artistic skill the popular conception of Niccolo. In this view the very sound of his name calls up a vision of dark deeds, midnight assassinations, daggers, cloaks, masks and poison, unfathomable treachery. But these intelligible, if unfounded ideas, have not satisfied the leaders in the perpetual controversies of politics. They have traced in the famous work known as *The Prince*—which is the basis of the present commemoration—various weighty and secret objects. Some refuse to credit the earnestness of the author, whose teachings they deem too demoniacal to have been seriously meant by a mere mortal, who could not deliberately put forth so ghastly a gospel of evil. They find a vein of bitter irony in the advice he offers

to the prince he addresses: under pretence of instructing him in villainy, he really holds the race of Kings up to the abhorrence of the people. Others think his real aim was to instruct the oppressed how to deliver themselves, since he is reported to have said that if he taught monarchs to tyrannise he also showed the people how to destroy them. He intended his works to be used in the spirit of Bertrand de Born, celebrated for ceaselessly fomenting war between France and England, and between our Henry II and his sons, that through their dissensions his own native land might remain independent. A third school maintains that the book was never designed for the study of an ambitious princelet: but is a philosophical dissertation upon the larger interests of great empires. Yet it is expressly dedicated to a prince, the 'most magnificent Lorenzo de Medici.' Lastly, an enthusiastic nation, since the aspirations for Italian consolidation have had tangible results, have seen in his writings a prophetic foresight of their present union. Reading his entire works by the light of recent events they believe his earnest aim was to teach some Italian Napoleon how to combine the petty duchies and princedoms of his time into one solid state. The last chapter of *The Prince* says as much in direct words: and there is other evidence that this was at least a distant motive, if not the immediate one. So that those who now sound the clarion, and unfurl the standard with pomp over his tomb, regard him as the Ulysses who with his cunning, as Petrarch with his song, prepared the way for those principles which through the sword of Garibaldi, and the brain of Cavour, finally triumphed in Victor Emmanuel. The ultra republicans declare that his spirit still claims the annexation of the Tyrol, the extinction of the Roman church; and build an Italian Monroe doctrine upon his remains.

Perhaps it was an instinctive feeling that he had insidiously undermined the despotic institutions which fostered priestcraft and which animated the attacks beginning with Cardinal Pole, and carried on by interdict down to the present day; when the Vatican doubtless sees in this commemoration a resuscitated anti-Christ applauded at its very doors.

When a lay reader, *i.e.,* one whose mind is unbiased by the influence of any school, peruses *The Prince* without searching for occult meanings, his conclusion is simple enough. Niccolo Machiavelli reflects his age as truly as a mirror. He paints with graphic personality the men of his day. From their actions he deduced a guide of conduct in exact accordance with their own private thoughts. He certainly describes inhuman deeds, and records a devilish system of policy: but was Defoe the cause, and did he desire the continuance of the plague because he so minutely pictured it? A man may surely be permitted to know his own intentions, and Machiavelli distinctly declares that his object in producing a manual of reference for a prince was to obtain employment from that prince—if only in rolling a stone. He had then to consider what would be most useful to his reader: clearly an analysis of the existing governments, and the secret springs of their actions. *The Prince* in short, is like the crystal balls of the necromancers, by steadily gazing upon which, the whole panorama of that period, its 'pomp and circumstance,' passes before the eye.

The man was cradled in politics: the science was a hereditary instinct in him. His ancestors with a pedigree of six hundred years, had abnegated the

pride of birth to gratify a greater pride: abjuring the barren nobility of title for the reality of power in the republic of Florence. The high office of Gonfaloniere of Justice rewarded them for this step thirteen times: more than fifty members of the family occupied various other places in the state: Niccolo's father, himself, held office. Niccolo was first a secretary in the court of chancery: next chancellor of the second court, and immediately afterwards secretary to the council who directed diplomatic affairs, when his real career began. This Florentine foreign office discerning the subtlety of his genius, and his keen observation, continually despatched him as their ambassador to the surrounding courts. On four occasions he waited on the French monarch: twice at the foot of the Papal throne: once on the Emperor Maximilian: besides inferior missions to the Lords of Piombino, Forli, Pisa, Imola, Vienna, Mantua: and above all visited Cesare Borgia, the darkest shadow of history, at the infamous and exciting moment of his life. With Ulysses, he might have exclaimed:—

Much have I seen and known; cities of men
And manners, climates, councils, governments,

and in effect, claims to place before the reader of *The Prince,* a knowledge acquired by a long experience of the times.

What order of men were these with whom he mingled; who, as we read the antique folio, steal across the page with stealthy tread, lest the jar of their footsteps should clank the steely corset hidden beneath their courtly velvet? Rude barons of an ignorant age? Nothing of the kind. Illiterate some may have been, in the narrow sense of lacking skill in clerk's craft: in all else polished, and beyond other eras, deeply versed in the science of man. If the 'proper study of mankind is man,' then never were students so learned; for never was such study so profound. They were adepts in human nature. True in the field they fought with lance and mace, possessing none of our weapons of precision: but in the cabinet and council chamber their serpent-like subtlety of speech and instinctive detection of secret motives as far excelled the blunt, palpable efforts of our modern diplomatists. At that date, the friction of personal character was paramount in politics. Full development, for good, or for evil, was permitted to those who held power in their hands. Men's minds from the highest to the lowest, were wrapped up in the aims of princes, who then had a personality hardly comprehensible in our time and country. This intense political tension—a national characteristic then and now—was a legacy of the disrupted Roman empire: whose course in its glorious days Machiavelli uses as a text to teach political wisdom. It needed a man of quickest wit, readiest resource, and keenest penetration, to cope with such giants of deceit: to steer the bark of the Florentine republic in that stormy hour: clear of the ranks of eager wreckers, who displayed their false lights to bring it on to the rocks.

See him at the Vinigaglia man-trap where Vitellozzo, Oliverotto, and the Orsini, 'lords of Romagna,' digged a pit and fell therein, caught by a cleverer hand at the laying of snares. In Cesare Borgia's train, envoy from Florence, came a thin man of moderate stature, and olive-hued cheek, watching with shrewdest eye the smallest straw that might indicate the secret policy of 'the

duke Valentinois' as he is called in the *History of Guicciardini,* by Master Geoffray Fenton, done into English, a most Riccabocca-like folio. This Italian Nimrod, a mighty hunter of men and beasts, who slew the wild bull in the open arena in sheer wantonness of strength, whose ambition as the same 'Guicciardini' says, was such that neither the mountains, nor the sea could contain him, there held high conference of state with the great barons. Reading Machiavelli's relation we see the stage whereon this tragedy was acted, the town between the mountains and the sea; the little market held before the gate on the bank of the river, those touches of local colour which make a picture live. Gallantly the show came riding on into Vinigaglia: Vitellozzo on his mule with his cap lined with green, yet in all that glory anxious, forboding his fate. Borgia received them with respectful salutations : and the three princes dismounting attended him in a private chamber where they were arrested, and Oliverotto, conveyed to a convenient place, was at once strangled, with Vitellozzo, 'his master in the art of war, and wickedness.' Guicciardini points out that it was the last day of December, as if the end of the year appropriately closed their eyes. Then Borgia turns to Machiavelli, and brazenly remarks that he had done Florence good service in putting out of the world these promoters of intrigue! The very spirit of the scene lurks in Bacon's quaint anecdote: 'Cesare Borgia after long division him, and the lords of Romagna, fell to accord with them.' In this accord there was an article that he should not call them at any time all together in person. The meaning was, that knowing his dangerous nature, if he meant them treason, some one might be free to revenge the rest. Nevertheless he did with such fine art, and fair carriage win their confidence that he brought them all to Council at Vinigaglia, where he murdered them all. This act was related to Pope Alexander, his father, by a Cardinal, as a thing happy, but very perfidious; the pope said, 'It was they that had broke the covenant first in coming all together.' Borgia wished to become the paid generalissimo of the Florentine forces: but Machiavelli, awake to the treachery of the man, naively observed that he could not see what security there would be for Florence with three-fourths of the army in Cesare's hands.

How sharp the contrast between such moments as these when men live a whole lifetime as it were in a few hours, between missions to the Court of France, and playing tric-trac with a miller and butcher! Machiavelli's fortune fell with the republic he served. The Medici re-entered Florence; he was first banished, and afterwards on unjust suspicion of conspiracy, cruelly tortured on the rack. Nothing, being proved, he was at last permitted to retire to a small country house, to struggle with poverty, and the still greater misery of inaction. He who had negotiated with Borgia, chopped wood, snared thrushes, and played tric-trac with the miller! It was then that his mind became the mirror reflecting to our time the men and deeds of his day. This is the true key to *The Prince* and other works. He tells us as much. The day, he writes, was passed in these frivolous amusements: but at eve he entered his study, changed his coarse country garb for the suit which he had worn in court and camp, and painted the pictures which have come down to us. It was like Buffon washing his hands and putting on his lace and cambric before he wrote. He idealised his age: refining its actions into a sequence of logical thought.

To grasp the drift of *The Prince* that age must be re-constructed in the mind. Transfer the scene to England. Imagine Windsor, Reading, Bristol, Salisbury, Oxford, and almost every town of similar importance, the capitals of little separate Kingdoms: each with its own regulus, or princelet; each with its own court, army, and senate. Imagine the boundaries sharply defined, and jealously guarded: tolls and dues demanded of passengers. One result of Machiavelli's mission to Cesare Borgia was the grant of free passage to Florentine merchants through Romagna. Salisbury by dint of employing the cleverest diplomatist of the day, gets from Oxford permission for her citizens to travel northwards of the Thames! Each city had its history, not a mere antiquarian past like ours: but living memories. Each had its own war office, and its foreign office: secret councils, deep negotiations, alliances, envoys, spies, intelligence bureau. Here was endless matter for intrigue. The political problem was still farther complicated: higher and more powerful factors had to be watched, and conciliated. First, Rome, which in our illustration we may place at Canterbury: next, the French monarch over the mountains in Wales; the German emperor say at Carlisle: Venice, in the Isle of Wight: Spain, in Ireland, as the galleys came by sea to Naples. These were ever advancing and receding: now adding to their share unfortunate Italy, absorbing duchies and princedoms, now losing them. Finally, bands of Free Companies, mercenary soldiers, roamed at large hither and thither, selling their services to any who offered them gold. The noise of battle was ever in the land: the whistle of the arrow, the twang of the arbalest, the clangour of armour, the splintering of lances, the thud of the mace, the snorting of horses, the shouting of the captains! On every craggy brow stood a castle: the very bridges were fortresses, as indeed they were in our own country, and still to this day retain in ornamental form the buttresses and flanking bastions of yore.

Uneasy slept the heads which wore these petty crowns. Take the regulus of Sarum on our imagined map: call him the Prince. He has to watch the motions of his neighbour duke of Oxford: to see that he does not obtain the aid of cavalry from France to blot out Sarum: to weaken Oxford's friend or cousin at Reading: to strengthen himself by alliance with Windsor. At home he has to note the temper of his people, and the fidelity of his troops: has Rome seduced them: had Borgia undermined them with gold? Still nearer, is his son, or his wife true: is there a dagger waiting, poison preparing to slay him in the bout of festivity? How shall he work upon the secret minds of adjacent princes: by marriages, by proposing joint enterprises—how shall he foresee the chances of war, and the results of victory or defeat? None can be trusted: every man's hand is against his fellow. He can maintain himself only by imitating the lion and the fox: by mingled force and fraud. Nor is the imaginary illustration without some historic justification. Our Richard III scarcely yields to Cesare Borgia in ambitious bloodshed, though untaught by any Niccolo Machiavelli: the whole story of the wars of the Roses is a practical commentary upon the maxim to get rid of the family of the opposing prince. As for lying promises, and deceit practised upon the miserable people, read Wat Tyler's times: when thirty clerks of Richard II's chancery wrote all day patents of pardon and enfranchisement which the moment the populace dispersed were annulled. There has just died a man,

an ally of England and, but a year ago, the host of the Prince of Wales, who in Nepal enacted a *coup de main* almost surpassing the massacre at Vinigaglia. Jung Bahadoor posted a guard at the entrance of the palace of his prince, and with his own gun shot down thirteen chiefs; thereby absorbing all power into his own hands. The same conditions everywhere produce the same results.

It was for the guidance of a regulus balancing himself on the pinnacle of power with eager enemies surrounding him that Machiavelli wrote *The Prince.* Let the reader of that manual put himself in the position of one of these dukes. See him sitting down in his private cabinet, and opening the vellum manuscript on a table which also bears his helmet, and naked sword! Listen—the thrush sings below it is true: but the deep bass of the armed sentinel on the terrace hums an accompaniment. Glance from the page out of the open window, a rich blue, cloudless sky, a flood of brilliant sunlight, distant misty mountains, but on the edge of the cliff the tall towers of a rival. Reflect that one false step, one moment's over confidence, and the dagger is in your heart, or the cord tightening round your neck! Here is the book which tells you what to do: when to dissimulate, when to strike; when to assume the lion, or the fox.

After a swift review of the various species of governments, Machiavelli, by pointing out the faults of a monarch, impresses upon the Prince what he should avoid. Louis XII might have retained Lombardy had he not committed five great errors. Firstly, he increased the strength of a great power: secondly, he destroyed that of the little ones: thirdly he called into the country a powerful foreigner: fourthly he did not live there personally: fifthly he did not send colonies. Yet these might have been rectified, if he had not committed a sixth in depressing the power of the Venetians, who if they had continued powerful would have prevented others from making acquisitions. This section contains the keynote of the larger policy of Machiavelli: but for his immediate affairs the prince must have a model, and he chooses Cesare Borgia: 'for I know no better lesson for the instruction of a prince than is afforded by the actions and example of the duke.' He then comes to rules for personal conduct, and here are the darkest chapters. He places his meaning beyond dispute in these words:

> I thought it better to treat this subject as it really is in fact, than to amuse the imagination with visionary models. ... For the manner in which men live is now so different from the manner in which they ought to live, that he who deviates from the common course of practice, and endeavours to act as duty dictates, necessarily ensures his own destruction. Thus a good man, and one who wishes to prove himself so in all respects, must be undone in a contest with so many who are evilly disposed. A prince who wishes to maintain his power ought therefore to learn that he should not always be good.'

Discussing which succeeds best, cruelty or clemency, he decides in favour of harshness, because fear carries with it the dread of punishment. This line of thought coincides with that in the Odyssey:

Let tyrants govern with an iron rod,
Oppress, destroy, and be the scourge of God;
Since he who like a father held his reign
So soon forgot, was just as mild in vain!

Princes need not be faithful to their engagements: a view that was neatly put by Leo X, who said that when a man had formed a compact with one party, he must none the less take care to negotiate with the other. Those who would maintain themselves, and those who would rise most judiciously mingle force and fraud. Of the successful prince it was truly said in the words of the old couplet:

One half the year he lives by force and art,
By art and force, he lives the other part!

The drift of the argument almost corresponds with the Tartar saw: 'If the enemy attack thy father's tent, join with them, and share the plunder.' Shrewd remarks exhibiting a keen insight into human nature occur on every page: as,— 'certain it is men sooner forget the death of their relations than the loss of their patrimony:' such is the nature of mankind that they become as strongly attached to others, by the benefits they render, as by the favours they receive:' 'either make a man your friend or put it out of his power to do you an injury'—an old Italian proverb. He notes that 'all the prophets who were supported by an armed force succeeded,' while Savonarola failed the moment the populace lost faith in him. He tells the Cardinal d'Ambroise that the French knew nothing of politics, else they would never have suffered the church to grow so powerful.

The tone of *The Prince* is intensely pessimist. He nowhere counsels evil for evil's sake: but simply because most men are wicked, and can only be governed by making due allowance for this fact. He says:

> It may be affirmed of mankind in general, that they are ungrateful, fickle, timid, dissembling, and self-interested: so long as you can serve them, they are entirely devoted to you: their wealth, their blood, their lives, and even their off-spring are at your disposal. When you have no occasion for them; but in the day of need, they turn their backs upon you: Besides men being naturally wicked, incline to good only when they are compelled to it.

His view of man is the same as that expressed in Genesis—'every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.' Evil is permanent: good only transient. Machiavelli was not responsible for the state of things which led him to deduce such a theory as this. All was treachery around him, as a student of the times he could come to no other conclusion. The contrast is startling when these maxims and instructions are compared with the popular political theories of the nineteenth century which are so entirely optimist. Each race is now held capable of developing itself upon its own soil—no foreigner has a right to control its destinies. Moral, social and political progress is believed to be the normal state of nations: only accident of circumstances has ever retarded it. The weight

removed the plant of freedom springs up and blossoms in peace. But, we must in justice to our author remember that the times of Cesare Borgia were not like the times of Queen Victoria. And there is one optimist idea, even in *The Prince: i.e.,* the unity and prosperity of Italy, and it is this idea that has led to the present commemoration.

The Italians do not celebrate maxims of deceit: they celebrate the politician who laboured to give liberty to their country. Machiavelli's most earnest effort during his grasp of power was the substitution of a militia raised at home in the place of the treacherous mercenaries Florence usually employed, in common with other states. To these mercenary troops he traced one half at least of the miseries the country groaned under. At Volterra for instance, a thousand of such hired soldiers, engaged to defend it, finding the place untenable, were tardy in their defensive operations: but indefatigable in their injuries upon the citizens. Finally, the besieging force, chiefly mercenaries, was admitted and then the greatest horrors ensued, neither women, nor sacred places were spared: the soldiery, those engaged for the defence as well as the assailants, plundered all within their reach. But when these men fought against each other in the open field, the conflict more resembled a hustling match than a battle, and the wounds received were scarcely more serious than the bruises borne by our football players. When Niccolo Piccinino was defeated at Anghiari,

> in a battle that lasted four hours, only one man died, and he, not from wounds inflicted by hostile weapons, or any honourable means, but, having fallen from his horse was trampled to death. Combatants then engaged with little danger: being nearly all mounted, covered with armour, and preserved from death whenever they chose to surrender, there was no necessity for risking their lives.

How ludicrous this sounds! No wonder Machiavelli was moved to indignation. He saw clearly that Italy would never be secure from foreign aggression, whether on the part of France, Germany, or Spain, while her princes put their trust in such feeble defences. In order to secure themselves from danger these valiant soldiers introduced the custom of not killing anyone in battle! Their discipline, he bitterly remarks, reduced Italy to a state of slavery.

> To their brilliant exploits! it is owing that Italy was invaded by Charles VIII, ravaged and plundered by Louis XII, oppressed by Ferdinand, and insulted by the Swiss.

He instructs *The Prince* to train a body of troops raised from among his own people: and totally to discard mercenaries. That famous book concludes with an exhortation to deliver Italy from foreign powers and interpreted by this the last chapter—the 'conclusion of the whole matter'—bears the obvious and laudable construction of being intended 'to teach a prince how to deliver his country.' It is in this sense that the Italians now commemorate the author: supporting this view by his work upon *The Art of War* in which he enters into the details of his system of national troops. They remember

that throughout *The Prince* he teaches a reliance upon the people. Such passages are numerous: as 'the only resource upon which a prince can rely in adversity is the affection of his people.' His *Reflections upon Livy* is a long glorification of republican Rome: and by implication leads to the idea that a republic is the best form of government: an idea naturally cherished by a people who have but just emerged from tyranny. They recall that striking passage in *The Prince* which proves that Machiavelli possessed a political foresight and wisdom far in advance of his times, since he so highly approved of a Free Parliament. France, he says, holds the first rank in well governed states.

> One of the wisest institutions they possess is unquestionably that of the Parliaments, whose object is to watch over the security of the government, and the liberties of the people. ... It must be confessed that nothing is more likely to give consistency to the government, and ensure the tranquillity of the people.

There are those who consider that the evil reputation of Machiavelli is rather due to the truth and the good in his writings than to the mischievous character of his maxims: the vast vested interests he attacks are not famous for forgiveness. The spurious letter to Zanobius is so far valuable that it sums up succinctly the chief reasons why he was condemned, and one of the most important is because in some places 'I vilify the church as author of all the misgovernment of the world.' The strongest of these passages appears to be where he writes:

> The church therefore having never been powerful enough to subjugate all Italy, and having prevented any other from occupying it, has been the cause, of this country's never being united under one chief, but continued divided amongst a great number of petty princes. Such is the cause of the weakness and dissension that has rendered it the prey, not only of foreign powers but of whoever chose to attack it.

Were the see of Rome removed to Switzerland, he says, where manners are so simple and pure, it would speedily corrupt them! The Vatican is hardly likely to pardon this language at the present moment: but it affords farther ground why those who have seceded from her pale should hold the memory of the writer in honour.

In personal character, Machiavelli presented remarkable patience and fortitude: both physical and mental. When on the cruel rack the levers were turned six successive times: but could not get from him one word that would implicate either himself, or others. His mind rose superior to the superstitions of his age as is clearly shown in the chapter of *The Prince* discussing how far Fortune influences events, and how far she may be resisted. He is of opinion that the mind may counteract ill luck and fight chance successfully: and the whole chapter is in singular contrast with the essay of our own Bacon, who inclines the other way, pointing out that those who have attributed so much to their own efforts have rarely prospered long. Timoleon never won after his boasted declaration that in his triumph

Fortune had no share, and Sylla preferred the title of Felix to any other.

The amusing story of Belphegor shows that Machiavelli possessed a quiet satirical humour which would have been appreciated in these days, when it is fashion to rail at women, and the Divorce Court is in full vigour. The scene opens in Hades, where Pluto is astounded at the number of souls which descend complaining that they have been sent thither by their wives. His council decide that one of their number shall ascend to earth, take the form of man, and essay matrimony as an experiment, but so terrible is the reputation of that condition that the Demons shrink from the task, and lots have to be resorted to. The lot falls upon Belphegor, who accordingly takes the shape of a man and with it a man's passions and feelings, and seeks the upper air. He assumes the name of Roderigo and is furnished with 100,000 ducats in order to ruffle it gallantly. Visiting Florence he falls in love with a lady of aristocratic birth, by name Honesta, whom he marries, and becomes so infatuated with her that she could make him in proverbial phrase 'jump over a straw.' She leads him a wretched life, spending vast sums, indulging in every extravagance and insolence; yet never satisfied, and so savage is her temper that she can never keep a servant more than three days. The very Demons who accompanied Roderigo in the form of footmen fly in haste to their native sphere before her withering tongue. Having exhausted his fortune, Roderigo to gratify her whims embarks in vast financial speculations: fails, and is obliged to rush off in disguise, pursued by exasperated enemies. He takes refuge in the yard of a peasant, one Matteo, who in consideration of a promised reward successfully conceals him. When the pursuers have departed, Roderigo emerging, reveals his true nature to Matteo, and informs him that in revenge upon the sex he intends to resume his spiritual existence and to enter into and plague women. But Matteo, by curing those possessed can earn a large fortune, since the moment he appears, Roderigo, in gratitude, will go out. Immediately afterwards, the daughter of a great nobleman is seized with convulsions and fits, and all those symptoms which are well-known to indicate demoniacal possession. Doctors attempt a cure in vain: but Matteo, hearing of a reward of 500 ducats, approaches the lady, and whispers in her ear, 'Roderigo come forth' and instantly she is well. In the same way he cures the daughter of the King of Naples, getting 50,000 ducats as his fee. Next, the daughter of the King of France is seized; but poor Matteo when summoned now goes in fear and trembling, reflecting that he may not always succeed, and indeed, after hearing the accustomed whisper, Roderigo accuses him of avarice, declares he will no longer be deprived of his revenge, and refuses to come out. However, the dread of execution sharpens Matteo's wits. The princess is placed on a stage, surrounded with bands of music and crowds of courtiers. 'When I throw up my hat,' says Matteo, 'Do you all shout your loudest, and play your instruments most vigorously.' He approaches the princess: 'Come out, Roderigo.' 'I will not, thou varlet,' replies the Demon, 'I will see thee neatly tucked upon the gallows first.' Whereupon Matteo casts his hat in the air, horns and trumpets blow, drums beat, and shoutings resound. 'Goodness,' exclaims the poor Demon, trembling, 'What is all this noise about?' 'Your wife is coming,' says Matteo, and in an instant away flies Roderigo, glad to hide himself in Hades from that awful vixen! This merry

tale is precisely opposed to the spirit of the eulogium upon *The Wife so* eloquently pronounced by Washington Irving, and which that cunning writer placed very near the beginning of his *Sketch-Book* in order to secure the suffrages of the sex, and induce them to lend it their powerful recommendation. A commentator naively observes that Machiavelli was himself married.