

A waling fae Chapter XVII o

The Prince

bi Niccolò Bernardo dei Machiavelli (1469-1527)

set ower in Scots bi Frances Robson (2017)

Chapter XVII

Oan bein fell an mercifu, an whether it is better tae be luvud than dreidit

..... Therefor a prince shuldnae fash hissel aboot bein cast up as fell whan it is a maitter o haudin his subjecks thegither in lealty; cause wi a when o fell examples, he will be mair mercifu than wi ithers, whae, fae an unco feelin o mercy, alloo the heeligoleerie tae cairry oan: fae aw this kythe murders an rievins. Fur ordinar these herm the hail community, while ony executions comin fae the prince herm jist wan person. Abuin aw ither princes, the new prince cannae win awa fae the reputation o bein fell, fur new states are stappit fu wi unchance. An Virgil pits it in the mooth o Dido: “Ma sair condition an newness o ma rule gar me act in sic a wey ah maun pit gairds aroond aw the mairches o ma laund.” Nivirtheless a prince maun be cannie in whit he believes an whit he cairries oot, tho he shuldnae be feart o his ain shadda, an he shuld gang oan in sic a forethochtie an couthie wey, so that muckle trust willnae mak him ramstam, nor muckle misdoot mak him sair tae thole.

Fae this kythes a threap aboot whether it’s better tae be luvud than dreidit, or the contrar. Ah repone that onywan wad lik tae be baith wan an the ither; but since it’s a sair fecht tae jine them thegither, it is ower sauffer tae be dreidit than luvud if wan o the twa misgaes. Fur ordinar ye can say this aboot men: that they are pick-thank, flichtrife, feigners an begunkers, feardie-gowks, aye

gripping fur mair; an while yer trauchlin awa fur their guid, thir aw yer ain, rump an stump, offerin ye thir bluid, thir guid an gear, thir lives an thir bairns – as ah've said abuin – whan thir's naethin unchancy gangin about: but, whan it comes nearer tae ye, they turn awa, an ony prince that foonds his pooer oan their wurds alane, haily withoot ony ither bield, comes tae ruination. Fur freendships won at a bonnie penny, an no thro maucht nor a hert o guidwill, are bocht, but no awned, an cannae be yaised at the richt time; an men dinnae swither about hermin onywan that gars ithers luv him, than wan that maks hissel dreidit: cause luv is hauden thegither bi a cheyne o ties, which is brukken at ony inlat, fur men are a sair shooer regairdin thir ain self-interest; but fear is hauden thegither bi dreid o a paikin that will nivir gang awa.

Nivirtheless a prince maun mak hissel sae dreidit that if he disnae win luv, he will evite laithin: cause tae be dreidit an no tae be laithed gang weel thegither. An this will aye be true whan he keeps his haunds aff the guid an gear an wummen o his citizens an subjects: an if he maun tak anither's life, he shuld dae it whan thir's guid justification an weel-kythed raison; but ower aw he shuld stey aff the guid an gear o ithers, cause fowk mind mair swippertly thir faither's daith than the tinsel o inheritance. Thir's nae want o raisons forby fur reivin thir guid an gear, but whaeivir lives bi reivin aye finds a raison fur takin whit belongs tae ithers; oan the contrar, raisons fur takin a life are rarer an suiner tint.....

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