**Natives of the same country preserve for all time the same characteristics.**

Wise men say, and not without reason, that whoever wishes to foresee the future must consult the past; for human events ever resemble those of preceding times. This arises from the fact that they are produced by men who have been, and ever will be, animated by the same passions, and thus they must necessarily have the same results. It is true that men are more or less virtuous in one country or another, according to the nature of the education by which their manners and habits of life have been formed. It also facilitates a judgment of the future by the past, to observe nations preserve for a long time the same character; ever exhibiting the same disposition to avarice, or bad faith, or to some other special vice or virtue. Whoever reads attentively the history of our city of Florence, and observes the events of our more immediate times, will find that the Germans and the French are full of avarice, pride, cruelty, and bad faith, from which evil qualities our city has suffered greatly at various times. As to the want of good faith, everybody knows how often the Florentines have paid money to King Charles VIII., upon his promising to restore to them the citadel of Pisa; which promises, however, he never fulfilled, thereby exhibiting his want of good faith and his greed of money. Let us come, however, to more recent events. Everybody may have heard of what happened in the war which the Florentines carried on against the Visconti, Dukes of Milan; and how Florence, having no other resources left, thought of calling the Emperor into Italy, in the expectation that he would devote his reputation and forces to assailing Lombardy. The Emperor promised to come with a sufficient force to carry on the war against the Visconti, and to defend Florence against their power, on condition that the Florentines should pay him one hundred thousand ducats before starting, and a like sum after he should have entered Italy. The Florentines agreed to these terms and made both the first and the second payment; but when the Emperor had reached Verona, he turned back without doing anything, alleging as a reason that the Florentines had not fulfilled their part of the agreement.

Thus, if Florence had not been constrained by necessity, or carried away by passion, and had studied and known the ancient habits of the barbarians, she would not have allowed herself to have been deceived by them on this occasion, as well as on several others. For the Gauls have constantly preserved the same characteristics, and have on every occasion, and towards everybody, displayed the same conduct as according to history they did in ancient times towards the Tuscans. These being hard pressed by the Romans, having been several times routed and put to flight by them, and finding their own forces insufficient to resist the assaults of the Romans, called to their aid the Gauls from beyond the Alps, agreeing to give them a sum of money on condition that they should unite their forces to those of the Tuscans, and march together against the Romans. Thereupon the Gauls, after having received the money from the Tuscans, refused to take up arms in their behalf; pretending that they had received this money, not for the purpose of making war against the Romans, but to induce them to abstain from plundering the country of the Tuscans. And thus were the Tuscan people deprived, by the avarice and bad faith of the Gauls, both of their money and of the assistance upon which they had counted from them. So that we see from this example of the ancient Tuscans, and by that of the Florentines of the present day, that the Gauls of old and the modern French have ever conducted themselves in the same manner; and thus we may readily judge to what extent princes may place confidence in them.