

we view so many once flourishing nations depopulated, and see such a diversity of shining actions and triumphant processions; when we trace the masterly strokes of politics, sagacity, and fortitude, so conspicuous in that people, and reflect on their advances to universal monarchy by schemes so judiciously concerted, so successfully supported, and so happily accomplished; to what view are all these mighty preparations directed? why truly to satiate the ambition of five or six monsters! 'is it possible then, that the senate could divest so many kings of their power, only to plunge themselves into the most abject slavery to one of their unworthy citizens, and to exterminate itself by its own edicts? did it rise to such a height of grandeur, to drop more splendidly into ruin, and do the sons of men only labour to augment their power, that they may fall, by their own combinations, into better hands!

When Caligula was assassinated, the senate assembled to form a new model of government, and, whilst they were engaged in such deliberations, a party of soldiers rushed in to plunder the palace, and found, in some obscure place, a man trembling with fear; this man was Claudius, and they immediately saluted him emperor.

Claudius completed the subversion of the ancient form of government, by intrusting the dispensation of justice to his officers: the principal motive to the wars of Marius and Sylla, was to determine the competition of the senators and the equestrian (*a*) order for this prerogative, and it was now wrested from both parties by the arbitrary fan-

(*a*) See Tacitus.