

plants the earth causes to spring up in places never visited by the sun-beams.

This sect furnished the Romans with their best emperors; none but Marcus Aurelius could extinguish the remembrance of the first Antonine who adopted him; and we find ourselves affected with a secret pleasure when we speak of this emperor. We cannot read his life without some impressions of tenderness, and grow inclinable to think better of ourselves, because the history of that prince makes us entertain a more favourable opinion of mankind.

The wisdom of Nerva, the glory of Trajan, the valour of Adrian, and the virtue of the two Antonines, gained them the veneration of the soldiers; but when a set of new monsters became their successors, the abuse of military government appeared in its full enormity; and the soldiers, who had exposed the empire to sale, assassinated the emperors for the sake of new gratuities.

It has been a conceived opinion that there is a certain prince in the world, who for the space of fifteen years has been endeavouring to abolish the civil government in his dominions, and to substitute the military in its room. I have no intention to make odious reflections on such a design, and shall only observe, that from the nature of things in general, two hundred guards may be a better security to a prince than four thousand; and besides, an armed people are of all others the most dangerous to be opposed.

Commodus succeeded his father Marcus Aurelius, and was a monster who gave a loose to all his own passions, and those of his courtiers. The persons,