

tion: for he that has been thus advanced, will always grow jealous and suspicious at last of that policy or power to which he owes his exaltation.

EXAMEN. CHAP. III.

THE fifteenth Century, in which Machiavel lived, still retained a strong tincture of Barbarism: they still preferred the baneful glory of Conquerors, and exploits that dazzle mankind with an air of grandeur, to gentleness of manners, to justice, to clemency, and all other virtues. But in these times, thank Heaven, the practice of humanity seems more glorious than the false lustre that used to attend the actions of Conquerors; and the world is now grown too wise any longer to admire and encourage those cruel passions which occasion such havock in it. I would fain know for what purpose a man can be desirous to establish an over-grown power upon the misery and destruction of others; or how he should ever think of making himself illustrious by oppressing the rest of his fellow-creatures. The dominions which a Prince enjoyed before, are not enriched by new conquests; his subjects are not at all the better for them; and he is much deceived himself, if he imagines they will make him any happier than he was. How many Princes have conquered Provinces by their Generals, which they afterwards never saw themselves? such conquests therefore are but imaginary acquisitions: and they ruin thousands of people only to gratify the caprice of one man, whose name is yet very often unworthy of being known to the world.

But suppose a Conqueror could subdue the whole world: would he be able to govern it when he had done? The greatest Prince, (who, after all, is but a poor limited creature) would hardly be able to remember so much as the names of its several Provinces; and his seeming grandeur would only serve to convince him of his real frailty and impotence.

It is not the largeness of territory alone that gives lustre to a Prince; neither does the acquisition of a certain number of leagues more in length or breadth, in the least add to his glory: for if that was the case, every man would be esteemed according to the number of acres he possesses.

The people in general who lived in Machiavel's days, might indeed be mistaken like him, with regard to their notions of glory; but surely they could not in general be so wicked at the heart as he was.