

was. Nothing can be more horrible than the expedients which he recommends to such as would keep possession of their conquests : for if we examine them, there is not so much as one of them that has the least appearance either of reason or justice on its side. *One ought, says he, to extinguish the whole family of the Prince who reigned before such a conquest.* Can any man read this maxim without trembling ? would not this be trampling upon every thing that is sacred in the world, and opening a door to all sorts of wickedness for the sake of private interest ? Suppose an ambitious Prince should forcibly and unjustly deprive another of his dominions ; has he therefore a right to poison or assassinate him and his whole family ? Besides, a Conqueror by such a manner of proceeding, is sure to introduce a practice that will at last turn to his own destruction. Another more ambitious and more powerful than himself, may invade his territories, and retaliate his barbarity, by extinguishing him and his family, with the same unrelenting rigour that he murdered his Predecessors. Of this, Machiavel's own times will afford us too many examples.

Alexander VI. when he died, was upon the point of being deposed for his unparalleled cruelties : his detestable Bastard, Cæsar Borgia, was stripped of all that he had heaped together by violence and rapine, and died miserably : Galeazzo Sforza was publicly assassinated in a Church at Milan : Ludovico Sforza, who afterwards usurped that State, was carried into France, where he was confined in an iron cage, and there died [b]. The Princes of the two houses of York and Lancaster, in England, tore out each other's bowels : the Grecian Emperors were continually murdering one another ; till at last, the Turk taking advantage of the weak condition to which they had reduced the empire by those slaughters, invaded their dominions, and utterly extirpated them. If such revolutions are not so frequent amongst Christians in these times, it is because the principles of true morality are now more generally promulged ; the minds of men are better cultivated, they have less ferocity in their manners ; and for this, perhaps, they are obliged to the writings of those learned men who of late have contributed so much to polish and civilize Europe.

Machiavel's second rule is, *That a Conqueror ought to establish his residence in his new dominions.* In this there is nothing amiss ; indeed

[b] Voltaire in his general History of Europe, vol. ii. p. 119. says, this story of the iron cage is entirely false ; and that Sforza was not only treated with distinction, but permitted to go abroad, the last five years of his life, to any place within five leagues of the Castle of Loches, though indeed he had been more strictly confined before.