

Such are the wisdom, virtue, and abilities, which Machiavel has taken upon him to recommend to the imitation of others in the like

But, as Bembo, Tomasi, our Countryman Gordon, and many others, have written their Diabolical Lives, the Reader, it is hoped, will excuse a repetition of such crimes as would make human nature shudder with horror. Let it suffice to quote what Mr. Voltaire says of their deaths in his General History of Europe, *vol. ii. p. 125.* Italy, not long after, says he, was delivered of Alexander VI. and his son. Historians unanimously transmit to posterity, that this Pope died of poison, which he designed for some Cardinals whom he had invited to sup with him: an exit indeed, worthy of his life. But the fact is not very probable. They pretend, that upon a pressing occasion for money, he wanted to enjoy the inheritance of those Cardinals. But it is well attested, that Caesar Borgia carried away a hundred thousand Ducats of gold out of his father's treasures, after his decease: so that he could not be in any real want. Besides, how could they both have been so mistaken in that poisoned bottle of wine, which is said to have been the cause of the Pope's death, and to have brought his son to the brink of the grave? Persons so long experienced in villainy, seldom leave room for such mistakes. They mention nobody that ever divulged the fact: how came they then to the knowledge of it? If the cause of the Pope's death had been known at the time he died, it would have been known to the very persons whom he wanted to poison. If so, they would not have suffered Borgia quietly to take possession of his father's treasure. The people who held such monsters in abhorrence, having been kept in subjection by Alexander, would have broke through all restraint at his death; they would have interrupted the funeral pomp of this wretch, and torn his abominable son to pieces.

In short, the Journal of the House of Borgia mentions, that the Pope being seventy-two years old, was seized with an intermitting fever, which soon became continual, and proved mortal. It is moreover said, that Duke Valentine caused himself to be sewed up in a mule's belly, which had been ripped up alive. Now I should be glad to know what antidote against poison there is in the belly of a mule.

It is true, there was a tumult in Rome after the Pope's decease, and the Colonna and Urfini returned thither with an armed force: but this very tumult would have been a proper opportunity for solemnly accusing both the father and the son of so horrid an attempt. Yet it was not done.

Finally, Pope Julius II. the mortal enemy of this family, and who had the Duke a long time in his power, did not charge him with what he had been accused of by the public voice.

But on the other hand, why should Cardinal Bembo, Guicciardine, Jovius, Tomasi, and so many other Contemporaries agree in this strange accusation? Whence are so many circumstances derived? How came they to specify the particular kind of poison, which was called *Cantarella*? We may answer, that it is not difficult for accusers to invent; and that so horrid a charge should have been supported by some probable arguments.

Alexander VI. left behind him a memory far more odious than that of Nero and Caligula; because a greater degree of guilt was implied in the Sanctity of his Character. And yet it is to him, that Rome is indebted for her temporal grandeur; it was he that enabled his successors sometimes to hold the balance of Italy. His son lost all the fruits of his crimes, which were gathered by the Church. Almost all the Towns he had seized upon, surrendered to others as soon as his father died; and Julius II. afterwards obliged him to deliver up the rest: so that he was quickly stripped of all his fatal grandeur. Friends, allies, relations, all the world, in short, either abandoned or betrayed him.