

invaded Africa with the other : by which spirited conduct he presently raised the Siege of Syracuse, and reduced the Carthaginians to such extremities that they were forced to come to an accommodation with him, and contenting themselves with their possessions in Africa, left him to make his best of Sicily.

Whoever then considers the conduct and actions of Agathocles, will find that he was but little, if any thing at all, obliged to fortune ; for he arrived at dominion, as we have already shewn, not by the favour of others, but by his own military Virtue, and afterwards maintained what he had thus acquired with infinite pains and hazard, merely by dint of courage and resolution. But a man cannot properly be called virtuous who massacres his Fellow-citizens, betrays his friends, and has no regard either to his word and honour, or to religion and humanity : for though indeed he may arrive at Empire, he can never acquire true glory by those means. When I reflect therefore upon the intrepidity and address of Agathocles, both in encountring and extricating himself out of all dangers, as well as his invincible magnanimity in adversity, I see no reason why he may not be ranked amongst the greatest Captains : but if we consider the horrid barbarities and innumerable other crimes he was guilty of, he certainly does not deserve to be numbered with truly virtuous or excellent *men*. We must not then attribute to Virtue or good fortune, what he accomplished without the assistance either of one or the other.

The other instance happened in our own times and under the Pontificate of Alexander VI. Oliverotto da Fermo being left an Orphan in his Infancy, was educated by Giovanni Fogliani [ *b* ], his Uncle by the mothers side, and sent when he grew up to serve under the banners of Paolo Vitelli, in order to learn the art of war and qualify himself for a general. But when Paolo died he bore arms under his brother Vitellozzo ; and being an active spirited man, soon became one of his best officers. However, as he thought it below him to be any longer dependant upon others, he conspired with certain Citizens of Fermo (who chose rather, it seems, to see their Country enslaved than to live in liberty) to seize upon that City by the assistance of Vitellesco : for which purpose, he wrote to his Uncle Fogliani, that having been absent many years, he was desirous of paying him a visit ; that so he might have an opportunity of seeing his old friends again, and of looking a little into his own affairs : and as his time had chiefly

[*b*] Guicciardine calls him *Frangiani*.