

him; those that do not, perhaps, have no other motive for their coolness than a natural timidity and want of Spirit: in which case however, he may employ them, and to good purpose too, if they are able in council: for then, they will honour him in prosperity, and in adversity they will do him no injury. But when that backwardness proceeds from ambition or some other latent cause, it is a sign that they have a greater regard for their own welfare and interest than that of their Prince: and therefore he ought to guard against them as professed enemies, and take it for granted, that, if he should fall into distress, they will certainly join with his enemies to ruin him if they can [r].

A Prince therefore who owes his exaltation to the favour of the people, ought to be very careful to preserve their affection: which is easily effected, as they require nothing more from him, than to defend them from oppression. But one who is advanced by the Grantees, contrary to the inclination of the people, must above all things endeavour to gain them afterwards: and that may be done without any difficulty, merely by taking them under his protection. And as it is but natural when we receive favours from a person from whom we expected nothing but injuries, to think ourselves so much the more obliged to such a benefactor; he will become more acceptable to the people than if he had been raised at first entirely by themselves. But since there are many ways of gaining them, which must be varied according to the times and circumstances of things, it is impossible to lay down any certain rule here for that purpose, and therefore I shall leave that to the discretion of others, and only say once more in general, that they must be gained at all events: for a Prince that does not take care of this, will find neither refuge nor remedy in adversity. Nabis Prince of Sparta, who was attacked by all Greece, and a victorious Roman army at the same time, defended his Government and Country against their whole power: and this he was enabled to do merely by securing the affections of a few, when he saw the danger approaching: whereas, if he had been hated by the people he must have been utterly ruined. Let no one therefore quote the old proverb against me, that, *Whosoever builds upon the people, builds upon sand*: for though it may be true that a private Citizen who depends upon the multitude to screen him from the power of the Magistrates, or the oppression of particular Enemies, will often find himself de-

[r] Valerius Flaccus; who courted Vitellius in all his Letters, at the same time sent Veipasian an exact account of all his motions, endeavouring to trim betwixt them both, and always to keep well with him that was uppermost; by which means he justly became suspected by them both, and secured the favour of neither.