

upon, and consequently cannot tell how to determine.—There is a Prince alive at this time (whose name however it may not be proper to mention) who has nothing in his mouth but *Peace and good Faith*: and yet if he had inclined either to one or the other, he would long ago have lost both his reputation and dominions [o].

EXAMEN. CHAP. XVIII.

THIS Preceptor of Tyrants has the assurance to assert here, that Princes ought to make themselves perfect masters of dissimulation in order to deceive the world.—Now, in the first place, every one knows how curious the Public is. It is an animal that sees every thing, hears every thing, and speaks of every thing: and if this curiosity examines the conduct of private persons, it is only by way of amusement in leisure hours: but when it pries into the actions of Princes, it is because its own interests are concerned in them. So that Princes are more liable to be watched in their proceedings than other people. They are like Stars which are observed by Astronomers: their Courtiers are making continual remarks upon them; the least gesture or glance of the eye lays open their hearts, and the people will form a pretty good guess from them. In short, they can no more conceal their vices than the sun can cover its spots. The mask of dissimulation may hide the natural deformities of a Prince for a while perhaps; but he cannot wear that mask continually: it must be taken off, or at least lifted up now and then, if it be only to breathe; and one glimpse is sufficient to satisfy men of penetration [p]. Artifice will then be of no further service to that Prince: men will not judge of him by his professions alone, they will naturally lay his actions together, and then compare his deeds with his words. Falsehood and dissimulation cannot stand such a proof: for no man can well support a fictitious character; he will soon discover himself, and appear in his own colours, and therefore he ought to be in reality what he would have the world think he is: otherwise he may make a fool of himself, but he cannot deceive the

[o] The abovementioned Ferdinand V. King of Arragon and Castile, is here meant, who owed the acquisition of the Kingdoms of Naples and Navarre merely to perfidy and breach of faith. Upon which, a certain Italian Prince, who was his cotemporary, used to say, “that Ferdinand should swear by some God in whom he believed, before he would trust him.”

[p] “Animus ejus vultu, flagitia parietibus tegebantur; sed hæc obstructio nec diuturna est, nec obducta ita, ut curiosis oculis perspicere non possit.” *Cic. pro. P. Sext.*—“Quam non est facilis virtus! quam verò difficilis ejus simulatio!” *Idem. Epist. ad Attic. lib. VII. Ep. 1.*—“Tecta omnia celeriter, tanquam flosculi, decidunt; nec simulatum potest quidquam esse diuturnum.” *Idem, De Offic. lib. III.*