

C H A P XIX.

That Princes should take care not to make themselves either hated or despised.

HAVING distinctly considered the most important of those qualities which I mentioned above, I shall briefly discuss the rest in a general discourse upon this subject, viz. that a Prince should take particular care, as I have hinted before, to avoid doing such things as may make him either odious or contemptible: which if he can do, he will fill his part pretty well, and need not be under any apprehension of danger from the infamy of other vices.—Nothing, as I have already said, makes a Prince so odious to his subjects as usurping their estates, and debauching their wives and daughters; from both which kinds of violence he ought therefore most carefully to refrain: for whilst he neither invades their property nor their honour, the Generality will live quietly and contentedly, and he will have nothing to struggle with but the ambition of some few persons, which yet he will easily find many ways and means to restrain. A Prince becomes contemptible when he is accounted changeable, full of levity, effeminate, pusillanimous, and irresolute [u]; all which imputations he should steer clear of as so many dangerous Shoals, and endeavour to keep up the character of magnanimity, courage, gravity, and resolution in all his actions. When he takes cognizance of the private affairs of his Subjects, he should see that his sentence is duly executed, and inspire them with such an opinion of his justice, that nobody may dare to think of abusing or deceiving him. The Prince that conducts himself in this manner will always be well esteemed: and that esteem will always be a great preservative to him both against private conspiracies and open attacks: for people will be very cautious how they attempt any thing of either kind, when they have so able and resolute a man, and so much respected by his Subjects, to deal with.

A Prince then you see has two things to guard against, the machinations of his own Subjects, and the attempts of powerful foreigners; the latter of whom he will be able to cope with, if he is well armed, and has good allies; and such he will always be sure to have, whilst his arms are respectable. His affairs at home likewise will be upon a good footing, so long as he is not molested from abroad, except they are

[u] “Vitellium subitis offensis, aut intempestivis blanditiis, mutabilem contemnebant, metuebantque.” *Tacit. Hist. 2.*

disturbed