

of the people: but if that cannot be effected, he ought to use all means to secure the affections of the stronger party.

Those Emperors therefore who were exalted to the Sovereignty from a private condition, and stood in need of extraordinary support, chose rather to adhere to the Soldiery than the people; which turned to their advantage or disadvantage, according to the degree of reputation they had amongst them. Hence it happened that Pertinax, and Alexander, being Princes of great moderation and clemency, lovers of Justice, enemies to violence, humane and benevolent, both came to unfortunate ends. Marcus Aurelius, indeed, lived and died in peace and honour, because he succeeded to the Empire by right of inheritance, without being obliged either to the Soldiery or the people: and as he had many excellent qualities, which afterwards made him revered, he kept them both within the bounds of their duty, as long as he lived, and was never either hated or despised by them. But Pertinax was murdered before he had reigned three months: for the Soldiery having been used to live licentious under Commodus, could not brook the reformation which he endeavoured to introduce amongst them: besides, as he had been chosen Emperor against their will, and was an old man, he became both odious and contemptible [i]. — It must be observed then, that hatred may be incurred by good actions, as well as by the contrary [k]; and therefore a Prince, who would support his State and authority, is often under a necessity of doing evil, as I have said before: for if the strongest party be corrupt (whether it is the people, or the army, or the Nobility) and he has occasion for their assistance to maintain his dignity, he must comply with their disposition, and indulge them: and in that case, he is not at liberty to be good, because it would be his ruin. — As to Alexander [l], he was a Prince of so much goodness and equity, that amongst his other praises, it is related, that during a reign of fourteen years, not so much as one man was put to death

[i] Old age often makes Princes become despicable. “*Ipsa ætas Galbæ & irrisui & fastidio erat assuetis juventæ Neronis. Tacit. Hist. 1.* either because they are then less enterprising, “*reputante Tiberio extremam ætatem: Annal. 6.* or because their enemies think they are not in a condition to defend themselves, “*Artabanus senectutem Tiberii ut inermem despiciens. ibid.* or that they look upon them as desultory and inconsistent, “*fluxam senio mentem objectando. ibid.* Besides, old age often obliges them to suffer themselves to be governed by others. “*Invalidum senem, odio flagitiorum oneratum, contemptu inertię destruebant. Hist. 1.* and those that serve them towards the latter end of their reign, make haste to enrich themselves by all manner of rapine and oppression. “*Afferebant venalia cuncta præpotentes liberti; servorum manus subitis avidæ, & tanquam apud senem festinantes,*” especially as they stand in but little awe of so helpless a Master, “*cum apud infirmum & credulum minore metu, & majore præmio peccaretur. Hist. 1.*

[k] “*Et quia moribus ipsorum aliena, perinde odium pravis & honestis. Tacit. Annal. 2.*

[l] Alexander Severus.