

against Niger; whilst he endeavoured to cojole and circumvent Albinus by other means. For this purpose, he wrote to the latter, that though he had been elected Emperor by the Senate, he was willing to share that dignity with him, and that he should likewise (as the Senate had so concluded) be called Cæsar, and acknowledged as his Collegue: all which Albinus was simple enough to believe. But after Severus had not only vanquished Niger, but put him to death, and settled the affairs of the East in peace, he returned to Rome, where he complained in the Senate that Albinus, forgetting the favours he had so lately received, had treacherously endeavoured to get him murdered: upon which account, he said, he was obliged to go and punish him for his ingratitude. And this he did effectually; for he marched into France against him, and there deprived him both of his share in the Empire, and his life at the same time.

If then we strictly examine the actions of this Prince, we shall find him as fierce as a Lion, and as subtle as a Fox, feared and revered by the people, without being hated by the Soldiery: and it will not seem any longer strange, that a new man should be able to maintain so large an Empire, when it is considered, that his great reputation always secured him from the hatred which his Subjects might otherwise have conceived against him, on account of his rapacious and oppressive disposition.—His Son Antoninus Caracalla was likewise a great man, and had many excellent qualifications, which made him admired by the people, and esteemed by his Soldiers: for he was of a warlike turn, patient of hardships and fatigue, an enemy to delicacy and self-indulgence of every kind, which highly recommended him to the army. Nevertheless, the ferocity and cruelty of his nature were such, that at different times he butchered the greater part of the Roman people, and all the inhabitants of Alexandria: so that he became odious to the whole World, and began to be feared even by those that were about his person, to such a degree, that he was killed by a Centurion in the midst of his army.—From hence we may observe, that it is not in the power of any Prince to escape such assassinations as proceed from an obstinate and determined resolution: for he that despises his own life, has always that of another in his power [g]. But a Prince has the less occasion to be apprehensive of these accidents, because

[g] “*Quisquis vitam suam contemnit, tuæ dominus est.*” *Senec. Epist. 4.* “*Periculum ex singulis, (said Vespasian to those that exhorted him to seize upon the Empire) quid enim profuturas cohortes, si unus alterque, præsentis facinore, paratum ex diverso præmium petit? Facilius universos impelli quam singulos vitari.*” *Hist. 2.* that is, “*Every private Soldier is to be feared; for of what service will Legions be against two or three resolute men, that are tempted by a great reward? it is easier to corrupt a whole army, than to guard against the Stroke of an assassin.*”