

they are exceeding rare [r]: he should take particular care however, not to do any grievous injury to any of his Officers, or such as are immediately employed under him, as Caracalla did, who still kept a Centurion in his body-guard, after he had put his brother to an ignominious death, and daily threatened to serve the man himself in the same manner; which was a piece of rashness and inconsideration, that proved his ruin, as might well be expected.

Let us in the next place, enquire into the merits of Commodus, who might easily have kept possession of an Empire, to which he succeeded by hereditary right, as Son to Marcus Aurelius: for he had nothing to do but to follow the steps of his father, in order to recommend himself both to the people and the army: but as he was of a cruel and brutal disposition, he indulged his Soldiers in such a manner, as made them licentious, that so he might the more effectually plunder his Subjects. Besides, he took so little care to keep up his dignity, that he often fought with common Gladiators upon a public Stage, and did so many other things, unworthy of the Imperial Majesty, that he soon became vile and contemptible in the eyes of the Soldiery: so that being despised by them, and hated by the people, they joined in a conspiracy, and killed him.

It now only remains to consider the character of Maximin. — After the Soldiery had dispatched Alexander, because they thought him too effeminate (as I have already said) they set up Maximin in his room, who was a great warrior: but as he likewise became odious and contemptible, he did not long support himself in the Empire [s]. The baseness of his extraction exposed him to contempt, and raised a general indignation against him; for every body knew that he had been a hog-driver in Thrace: and the cruelties which his Lieutenants exercised both at Rome, and in all other parts of the Empire, before he came thither to take possession of the Imperial dignity, gave people sufficient reason to look upon him as a Savage and blood-thirsty Tyrant. So that every one being either filled with disdain at the vileness of his birth, or shocked with the report of his cruelties, Africa in the first place, and afterwards the whole Senate and people of Rome, and all Italy, conspired against him: in which they were seconded by his own Soldiers, who being tired out with the hardships of a long and unsuccessful siege before Aquileia, and the frequent repetition of his barbarities, were encouraged, when they saw how generally he was hated, to fall upon him and kill him [t].

I shall

[r] Except in France.

[s] A little above two years.

[t] This Prince was of a gigantic Stature, and such a glutton, that it is said he would eat forty pounds of meat, and drink eight bottles of wine in a day. He became such a monster